

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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VERY HARD CASH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AT these plain proofs of Alfred's infidelity, Julia's sweet throat began to swell hysterically, and then her bosom to heave and pant: and, after a piteous struggle, came a passion of sobs and tears so wild, so heartbroken, that Edward blamed himself bitterly for telling her.

But Mrs. Dodd sobbed "No, no, I would rather have her so; only leave her with me now: bless you, darling: leave us quickly."

She rocked and nursed her deserted child hours and hours; and so the miserable day crawled to its close.

Down stairs the house looked strange and gloomy: she, who had brightened it all, was darkened herself. The wedding breakfast and flowers remained in bitter mockery. Sarah cleared half the table, and Sampson and Edward dined in moody silence.

Presently Sampson's eye fell upon the Deed: it lay on a small table with a pen beside it, to sign on their return from church.

Sampson got hold of it and buried himself in the verbiage like a pearl-fisher diving. He came up again with a discovery. In spite of its feebleness, verbosity, obscurity, and idiotic way of expressing itself, the Deed managed to convey to David and Mrs. Dodd a life interest in nine thousand five hundred pounds, with reversion to Julia and the children of the projected marriage. Sampson and Edward put their heads over this, and it puzzled them. "Why, man," said Sampson, "if the puppy had signed this last night, he would be a beggar now."

"Ay," said Edward, "but after all he did not sign it."

"Nay, but that was your fault, not his; the lad was keen to sign."

"That is true: and perhaps if we had pinned him to this, last night, he would not have dared insult my sister to-day."

Sampson changed the subject by inquiring suddenly which way he was gone.

"Curse him, I don't know; and don't care. Go where he will I shall meet him again some day; and then—" Edward spoke almost in a whisper, but a certain grinding of his white teeth and flashing of his lion eyes made the incomplete sentence very expressive.

"What ninnies you young men are," said the Doctor; "even you, that I dub 'my fathom o' good sense': just finish your dinner, and come with me."

"No, Doctor; I'm off my feed for once: if you had been up-stairs and seen my poor little sister! hang the grub; it turns my stomach." And he shoved his plate away, and leaned over the back of his chair.

Sampson made him drink a glass of wine, and then they got up from the half-finished meal and went hurriedly to Alfred's lodgings, the Doctor, though sixty, rushing along with all the fire and buoyancy of early youth.

They found the landlady surrounded by gossips curious as themselves, and longing to chatter, but no materials. The one new fact they elicited was that the vehicle was a White Lion fly, for she knew the young man by the cast in his eye. "Come away," shouted the Doctor, unceremoniously, and in two minutes they were in the yard of the White Lion.

Sampson called the ostler: out came a hard-featured man with a strong squint. Sampson concluded this was his man, and said roughly: "Where did you drive young Hardie this morning?"

He seemed rather taken aback by this abrupt question; but reflected and slapped his thigh: "Why that is the party from Mill-street."

"Yes."

"Driv him to Silverton station, sir: and wasn't long about it, either; gent was in a hurry."

"What train did he go by?"

"Well, I don't know, sir; I left him at the station."

"Well, then where did he take his ticket for? Where did he tell the porter he was going? Think now, and I'll give y' a sovereign."

The ostler scratched his head, and seemed at first inclined to guess for the sovereign, but at last said: "I should only be robbing you, gents; ye see he paid the fly then and there, and gave me a crown: and I driv away directly."

On this they gave him a shilling, and left him. But on leaving the yard, Edward said: "Doctor, I don't like that fellow's looks: let us try the landlord." They went into the bar and made similar inquiries. The landlord was out, the mistress knew nothing about it, but took a book out of a drawer, and turned over the leaves. She read out an entry to this effect:

"Pair horse fly to Silverton: take up in Mill-street at eight o'clock. Is that it, sir?" Sampson assented; but Edward told her the ostler said it was Silverton station.

"No: it is Silverton in the book, sir. Well, you see it is all one to us; the station is further than the town, but we charge seven miles which ever 'tis."

Bradshaw, inspected then and there, sought in vain to conceal that four trains reached Silverton from different points between 8.50 and 9.25, A.M.

The friends retired with this scanty information; Alfred could hardly have gone to London: for there was a train up from Barkington itself at 8.30. But he might have gone to almost any other part of the island, or out of it for that matter. Sampson fell into a brown study.

After a long silence, which Edward was too sad to break, he said thoughtfully: "Bring science to bear on this hotch potch. Facks are never really opposed to facks; they only seem to be: and the true solution is the one which riconciles all the facks: f'r instance the chrono-thairmal Therey riconciles all th' undisputed facks in midicine. So now sairch for a soluton to riconcile the Deed with the puppy levanting."

Edward searched, but could find none; and said so.

"Can't you?" said Sampson; "then I'll give you a couple. Say he is touched in the upper story, for one."

"What do you mean? mad?"

"Oh: there are degrees of Phrinzy. Here is th' inconsistency of conduct that marks a disturbance of the reason: and, to tell the truth, I once knew a young fellow that played this very prank at a wedding, and, the nixt thing we hard, my lorr was in Bedlam."

Edward shook his head: "It is the villain's heart, not his brain."

Sampson then offered another solution, in which he owned he had more confidence:

"He has been courting some other wumman first: she declined, or made believe; but, when she found he had the spirit to go and marry an innocent girl, then the jade wrote to him and yielded. It's a married one, likely. I've known women go further for hatred of a wumman than they would for love of a man: and here was a temptation! to snap a lover off th' altar, and insult a rival, all at one blow. He meant to marry; he meant to sign that deed: ay and, at his age, even if he had signed it, he would have gone off at passion's call, and begged himself. What enrages me is that we didn't let him sign it, and so nail the young rascal's money."

"Curse his money," said Edward, "and him too. Wait till I can lay my hand on him; I'll break every bone in his skin."

"And I'll help you."

In the morning, Mrs. Dodd left Julia for a few minutes expressly to ask Sampson's advice. After Alfred's conduct she was free, and fully determined, to defend herself and family against

sploration by any means in her power; so she now showed the doctor David's letter about the 14,000*l.*; and the empty pocket-book; and put together the disjointed evidence of Julia, Alfred, and circumstances, in one neat and luminous statement: Sampson was greatly struck with the revelation: he jumped off his chair and marched about excited; said truth was stranger than fiction, and this was a manifest swindle: then he surprised Mrs. Dodd in her turn by assuming that old Hardie was at the bottom of yesterday's business. Neither Edward nor his mother could see that, and said so: his reply was characteristic: "Of course you can't; you are Anglo-saxins; th' Anglosaxins are good at drawing distinctions; but they can't generalise. I'm a Celt, and generalise—as a duck swims. I discovered th' unity of all disease: it would be odd if I could not trace the manifold iniquities you suffer to their one source."

"But what is the connecting link?" asked Mrs. Dodd, still incredulous.

"Why, Richard Hardie's interest."

"Well, but the letter?" objected Edward.

"There goes th' Anglosaxin again," remonstrated Sampson: "puzzling his head over petty details; and they are perhaps mere blinds thrown out by th' enemy. Put this and that together: Hardie senior always averse to this marriage; Hardie senior wanting to keep 14,000*l.* of yours: if his son, who knows of the fraud, became your mother's son, the swindle would be hourly in danger (no connexion? y' unhappy Anglo-saxins; why the two things are interwoven). And so young Hardie is got out of the way: old Hardie's doing, or I'm a Dutchman."

This reasoning still appeared forced and fanciful to Edward; but it began to make some little impression on Mrs. Dodd, and encouraged her to own that her poor daughter suspected foul play.

"Well, that is possible too; whatever tempted man has done, tempted man will do: but more likely he has bribed Jezebel to write and catch the goose by the heart. Gentlemen, I'm a bit of a physiognomist: look at old Hardie's lines; his cordage I might say; and deeper every time I see him; sirs, I've an eye like a hawk. There's an awful weight on that man's mind. Looksee! I'll just send a small trifle of a detective down to watch his game, and pump his people: and, as soon as it is safe, we'll seize the old bird, and, once he is trapped, the young one will reappear like magic: th' old one will disgorge; we'll just compound the felony—been an old friend—and recover the cash."

A fine sketch; but Edward thought it desperately wild, and Mrs. Dodd preferred employing a respectable attorney to try and obtain justice in the regular way. Sampson laughed at her; what was the use of attacking in the regular way an irregular genius like old Hardie?

"Attorneys are too humdrum for such a job," said he; "they start with a civil letter putting a rogue on his guard; they proceed t' a writ, and then he digs a hole in another county and buries the booty; or sails t' Australia with it."

N'list'me; I'm an old friend, and an insane lover of justice—I say insane, because my passion is not returned, or the jade wouldn't keep out of my way so all these years—you leave all this to me."

"Stop a minute," said Edward; "you must not go compromising us: and we have got no money to pay for luxuries, like detectives."

"I won't compromise any one of you: and my detective shan't cost y' a penny."

"Ah, my dear friend," said Mrs. Dodd, "the fact is, you do not know all the difficulties that beset us. Tell him, Edward. Well then, let me. The poor boy is attached to this gentleman's daughter, whom you propose to treat like a felon: and he is too good a son and too good a friend for me to—what, what, shall I do?"

Edward coloured up to the eyes: "Who told you that, mother?" said he. "Well, yes I do love her, and I'm not ashamed of it. Doctor," said the poor fellow after a while, "I see now I am not quite the person to advise my mother in this matter. I consent to leave it in your hands."

And, in pursuance of this resolution, he retired to his study.

"There's a domnable combination," said Sampson, dryly. "Truth is sairtainly more wonderful than feckshin. Here's my fathom o' good sense in love with a wax doll, and her brother jilting his sister, and her father pillaging his mother. It beats hotch potch."

Mrs. Dodd denied the wax doll: but owned Miss Hardie was open to vast objections: "An estimable young lady; but so odd; she is one of these uneasy-minded Christians that have sprung up: a religious egotist, and malade imaginaire, eternally feeling her own spiritual pulse—"

"I know the disorder," cried Sampson, eagerly: "the pashints have a hot fit (and then they are saints): followed in due course by the cold fit (and then they are the worst of sinners): and so on in endless rotation: and, if they could only realise my great discovery, the perriodicity of all disease, and time their sentiments, they would find the hot fit and the cold return chronometrically, at intervals as riglar as the tide's ebb and flow; and the soul has nothing to do with either febrile symptom. Why Religion, apart from intermittent Fever of the Brain, is just the cauntest, peaceablest, sedatest thing in all the world."

"Ah, you are too deep for me, my good friend. All I know is that she is one of this new school, whom I take the liberty to call 'THE FIDGETY CHRISTIANS.' They cannot let their poor souls alone a minute; and they pester one day and night with the millennium; as if we shall not all be dead long before that: but the worst is they apply the language of earthly passion to the Saviour of mankind, and make one's flesh creep at their blasphemies; so coarse, so familiar; like that rude multitude which thronged and pressed Him when on earth. But, after all, she came to the church, and took my Julia's part; so that shows she has principle;

and do pray spare me her feelings in any step you take against that dishonourable person her father: I must go back to his victim, my poor, poor child: I dare not leave her long. Oh, Doctor, such a night! and, if she dozes for a minute, it is to wake with a scream and tell me she sees him dead: sometimes he is drowned; sometimes stained with blood; but always dead."

This evening Mr. Hardie came along in a fly with his luggage on the box, returning to Musgrave Cottage as from Yorkshire: in passing Albion Villa he cast it a look of vindictive triumph. He got home and nodded by the fire in his character of a man wearied by a long journey. Jane made him some tea, and told him how Alfred had disappeared on his wedding-day.

"The young scamp," said he: he added, coolly, "it is no business of mine; I had no hand in making the match, thank Heaven." In the conversation that ensued, he said he had always been averse to the marriage; but not so irreconcilably as to approve this open breach of faith with a respectable young lady: "this will recoil upon our name, you know, at this critical time," said he.

Then Jane mustered courage to confess that she had gone to the wedding herself: "Dear papa," said she, "it was made clear to me that the Dodds are acting in what they consider a most friendly way to you. They think—I cannot tell you what they think. But, if mistaken, they are sincere: and so, after prayer, and you not being here for me to consult, I did go to the church. Forgive me, papa: I have but one brother; and she is my dear friend."

Mr. Hardie's countenance fell at this announcement, and he looked almost diabolical. But on second thoughts he cleared up wonderfully: "I will be frank with you, Jenny: if the wedding had come off, I should have been deeply hurt at your supporting that little monster of ingratitude; he not only marries against his father's will (that is done every day), but slanders and maligns him publicly in his hour of poverty and distress. But, now that he has broken faith and insulted Miss Dodd as well as me, I declare I am glad you were there, Jenny. It will separate us from his abominable conduct. But what does he say for himself? What reason does he give?"

"Oh, it is all mystery as yet."

"Well, but he must have sent some explanation to the Dodds."

"He may have: I don't know. I have not ventured to intrude on my poor insulted friend. Papa, I hear her distress is fearful; they fear for her reason. Oh if harm comes to her, God will assuredly punish him whose heartlessness and treachery has brought her to it. Mark my words," she continued with great emotion, "this cruel act will not go unpunished even in this world."

"There, there, change the subject," said Mr. Hardie peevishly. "What have I to do with his

pranks? he has disowned me for his father, and I disown him for my son."

The next day Peggy Black called, and asked to see master. Old Betty, after the first surprise, looked at her from head to foot, and foot to head, as if measuring her for a suit of Disdain; and told her she might carry her own message; then flounced into the kitchen, and left her to shut the street door, which she did. She went and dropped her curtsey at the parlour door, and in a miming piming voice said she was come to make her submission, and would he forgive her, and give her another trial? Her penitence, after one or two convulsive efforts, ended in a very fair flow of tears.

Mr. Hardie shrugged his shoulders, and asked Jane if the girl had ever been saucy to her.

"Oh no, papa: indeed I have no fault to find with poor Peggy."

"Well then go to your work, and try and not offend Betty; remember she is older than you."

Peggy went for her box and bandbox, and reinstated herself quietly, and all old Betty's endeavours to irritate her only elicited a calm cunning smile, with a depression of her downy eyelashes.

Albion Villa.

Next morning Edward Dodd was woken out of a sound sleep, at about four o'clock, by a hand upon his shoulder: he looked up, and rubbed his eyes; it was Julia standing by his bedside dressed, and in her bonnet: "Edward," she said in a hurried whisper, "there is foul play: I cannot sleep, I cannot be idle. He has been decoyed away, and perhaps murdered. Oh, pray get up and go to the police office or somewhere with me."

"Very well; but wait till morning."

"No; now; now; now; now. I shall never go out of doors in the daytime again. Wait? I'm going crazy with wait, wait, wait, wait, waiting."

Her hand was like fire on him, and her eyes supernaturally bright.

"There," said Edward with a groan, "go down stairs, and I will be with you directly."

He came down: they went out together; her little burning hand pinched his tight, and her swift foot seemed scarcely to touch the ground; she kept him at his full stride till they got to the central police station. There, at the very thought of facing men, the fiery innocent suddenly shrank together, and covered her blushing face with her hot hands. She sent him in alone. He found an intelligent superintendent, who entered into the case with all the coolness of an old official hand.

Edward came out to his sister, and, as he hurried her home, told her what had passed: "The superintendent asked to see the letter; I told him he had taken it with him: that was a pity, he said. Then he made me describe Alfred to a nicely: and the description will go up to London this morning, and all over Barkington, and the neighbourhood, and the county."

She stopped to kiss him, then went on again with her head down, and neither spoke till they

were nearly home: then Edward told her "the superintendent felt quite sure that the villain was not dead; nor in danger of it."

"Oh, bless him! bless him! for saying so."

"And that he will turn up in London before very long; not in this neighbourhood; he says he must have known the writer of the letter, and his taking his luggage with him shows he has gone off deliberately. My poor little Ju, now do try and look at it as he does, and everybody else does; try and see it as you would if you were a bystander."

She laid her soft hand on his shoulder as if to support herself floating in her sea of doubt: "I do see I am a poor credulous girl; but how can my Alfred be false to me? Am I to doubt the Bible? am I to doubt the sun? Is nothing true in heaven or earth? Oh, if I could only have died as I was dressing for church—died while he seemed true! He is true; the wicked creature has cast some spell on him: he has gone in a moment of delirium; he will regret what he has done, perhaps regrets it now. I am ungrateful to you, Edward, and to the good policeman, for saying he is not dead. What more do I require? he is dead to me. Edward, let us leave this place. We were going: let us go to-day; this very day; oh, take me and hide me where no one that knows me can ever see me again." A flood of tears came to her relief: and she went along sobbing and kissing her brother's hand every now and then.

But, as they drew near the gate of Albion Villa, twilight began to usher in the dawn. Julia shuddered at even that faint light, and fled like a guilty thing, and hid herself sobbing in her own bedroom.

Musgrove Cottage.

Mr. Richard Hardie slept better, since his return from Yorkshire, than he had done for some time past, and therefore woke more refreshed and in better spirits. He knew an honest family was miserable a few doors off; but he did not care. He got up and shaved with a mind at ease. Only, when he had removed the lather from one half his face, he happened to look out of window, and saw on the wall opposite—a placard: a large placard to this effect:

"ONE HUNDRED GUINEAS REWARD!"

Whereas on the 11th instant Mr. Alfred Hardie disappeared mysteriously from his lodgings in 15 Mill-street under circumstances suggesting a suspicion of foul play, know all men that the above reward will be paid to any person or persons who shall first inform the undersigned where the said Alfred Hardie is to be found, and what person or persons, if any, have been concerned in his disappearance.

ALEXANDER SAMPSON

39 Pope-street

Napoleon-square

London."

At sight of this, Mr. Hardie was seized with a tremor, that suspended the razor in mid air:

he opened the window, and glared at the doctor's notice.

At this moment he himself was a picture: not unlike those half cleaned portraits the picture restorers hang out as specimens of their art.

"Insolent interfering fool," he muttered, and began to walk the room in agitation. After a while he made a strong effort, shaved the other half, and dressed slowly, thinking hard all the time. The result was, he went out before breakfast (which he had not done for years), and visited the "White Lion." One of Sampson's posters had just been stuck up near the inn; he quietly pulled it down and then entered the yard; and had a serious talk with the squinting ostler.

On his return, Jane was waiting breakfast. The first word to him was: "Papa, have you seen?"

"What, the Reward!" said he, indifferently. "Yes, I noticed it at our door as I came home."

Jane said it was a very improper and most indelicate interference in their affairs. And went on to say with heightened colour: "I have just told Peggy to take it down."

"Not for the world!" cried Mr. Hardy, losing all his calmness real or feigned; and he rang the bell hastily. On Peggy's appearing, he said anxiously, "I do not wish that Notice interfered with."

"I shouldn't think of touching it without your orders, sir," said she, quietly, and shot him a feline glance from under her pale lashes.

Jane coloured, and looked a little mortified: but on Peggy's retiring, Mr. Hardie explained that, whether judicious or not, it was a friendly act of Dr. Sampson's; and to pull down his notice would look like siding with the boy against those he had injured: "Besides," said he, "why should you and I burk inquiry? Ill as he has used me, I am his father, and not altogether without anxiety. Suppose those doctors should be right about him, you know?"

Jane had for some time been longing to call at Albion Villa and sympathise with her friend; and now curiosity was superadded; she burned to know whether the Dodds knew of, or approved this placard. She asked her father whether he thought she could go there with propriety. "Why not?" said he, cheerfully, and with assumed carelessness.

In reality it was essential to him that Jane should visit the Dodds. Surrounded by pitfalls, threatened with a new and mysterious assailant in the eccentric, but keen and resolute Sampson, this artful man, who had now become a very Machiavel—constant danger and deceit had so sharpened and deepened his great natural abilities—was preparing amongst other defences a shield; and that shield was a sieve; and that sieve was his daughter. In fact, ever since his return, he had acted and spoken at the Dodds through Jane, but with a masterly appearance of simplicity and mere confidential intercourse. At least I think this is the true clue to all his recent remarks.

Jane, a truthful, unsuspecting girl, was all the fitter instrument of the cunning monster. She went and called at Albion Villa, and was received by Edward, Mrs. Dodd being up-stairs with Julia, and in five minutes she had told him what her father, she owned, had said to her in confidence. "But," said she, "the reason I repeat these things is to make peace, and that you may not fancy there is any one in our house so cruel, so unchristian, as to approve Alfred's perfidy. Oh, and papa said candidly he disliked the match, but then he disliked this way of ending it far more."

Mrs. Dodd came down in due course, and kissed her; but told her Julia could not see even her at present. "I think, dear," said she, "in a day or two she will see *you*; but no one else: and for her sake we shall now hurry our departure from this place, where she was once so happy."

Mrs. Dodd did not like to begin about Alfred; but Jane had no such scruples; she inveighed warmly against his conduct, and, ere she left the house, had quite done away with the faint suspicion Sampson had engendered, and brought both Mrs. Dodd and Edward back to their original opinion, that the elder Hardie had nothing on earth to do with the perfidy of the younger.

Just before dinner a gentleman called on Edward, and proved to be a policeman in plain clothes. He had been sent from the office to sound the ostler at the "White Lion," and, if necessary, to threaten him. The police knew, though nobody else in Barkington did, that this ostler had been in what rogues call trouble, twice, and, as the police can starve a man of the kind by blowing on him, and can reward him by keeping dark, he knows better than withhold information from them.

However, on looking for this ostler, he had left his place that very morning; had decamped with mysterious suddenness.

Here was a puzzle.

Had the man gone without noticing the reward? Had somebody outbid the reward? or was it a strange coincidence, and did he after all know nothing?

The police thought it was no coincidence, and he did know something; so they had telegraphed the London office to mark him down.

Edward thanked his visitor; but, on his retiring, told his mother he could make neither head nor tail of it; and she only said, "We seem surrounded by mystery."

Meantime, unknown to these bewildered ones, Greek was meeting Greek only a few yards off.

Mr. Hardie was being undermined by a man of his own calibre, one too cautious to communicate with the Dodds, or any one else, till his work looked ripe.

The game began thus: a decent mechanic, who lodged hard by, lounging with his pipe near the gate of Musgrove Cottage, offered to converse with old Betty: she gave him a rough answer; but with a touch of ineradicable vanity must ask Peggy if she wanted a sweetheart, be-

cause there was a hungry one at the gate: "Why he wanted to begin on an old woman like me?" Peggy inquired what he had said to her.

"Oh, he began where most of them ends, if they get so far at all: axed me was I comfortable here; if not, he knew a young man wanted a nice tidy body to keep house for him."

Peggy pricked up her ears; and, in less than a quarter of an hour, went for a box of lucifers in a new bonnet and clean collar. She tripped past the able mechanic very accidentally, and he bestowed an admiring smile on her, but said nothing, only smoked. However, on her return, he contrived to detain her, and paid her a good many compliments, which she took laughingly and with no great appearance of believing them. However, there is no going by that: compliments sink: and within forty-eight hours the able mechanic had become a hot wooer of Peggy Black, always on the look-out for her day and night, and telling her all about the lump of money he had saved, and how he could double his income, if he had but a counter, and tidy wife behind it. Peggy gossiped in turn, and let out amongst the rest that she had been turned off once, just for answering a little sharply; and now it was the other way; her master was a trifle too civil at times.

"Who could help it?" said the able mechanic, rapturously; and offered a pressing civility; which Peggy fought off.

"Not so free, young man," said she. "Kissing is the prologue to sin."

"How do you know that?" inquired the able mechanic, with the sly humour of his class.

"It is a saying," replied Peggy, demurely.

At last, one night, Mr. Green the Detective, for he it was, put his arm round his new sweet-heart's waist, and approached the subject nearest his heart. He told her he had just found out there was money enough to be made in one day to set them up for life in a nice little shop; and she could help in it.

After this inviting preamble he crept towards the 14,000^Z by artful questions; and soon elicited that there had been high words between Master and Mr. Alfred about that very sum; she had listened at the door and heard. Taking care to combine close courtship with cunning interrogatories, he was soon enabled to write to Dr. Sampson, and say that a servant of Mr. Hardie's was down on him, and reported that he carried a large pocket-book in his breast-pocket by day; and she had found the dent of it under his pillow at night; a stroke of observation very creditable in an unprofessional female: on this he had made it his business to meet Mr. Hardie in broad day, and sure enough the pocket-book was always there. He added, that the said Hardie's face wore an expression, which he had seen more than once when respectable parties went in for felony: and altogether thought they might now take out a warrant and proceed in the regular way.

Sampson received this news with great satisfaction: but was crippled by the interwoven relations of the parties.

To arrest Mr. Hardie on a warrant would entail a prosecution for felony, and separate Jane and Edward for ever.

He telegraphed Green to meet him at the station; and reached Barkington at eight that very evening. Green and he proceeded to Albion Villa, and there they held a long and earnest consultation with Edward; and at last, on certain conditions, Mr. Green and Edward consented to act on Sampson's plan. Green, by this time, knew all Mr. Hardie's out of door habits; and assured them that at ten o'clock he would walk up and down the road for at least half an hour, the night being dry. It wanted about a quarter to ten, when Mrs. Dodd came down, and proposed supper to the travellers. Sampson declined it for the present; and said they had work to do at eleven. Then, making the others a signal not to disclose anything at present, he drew her aside and asked after Julia.

Mrs. Dodd sighed:—"She goes from one thing to another, but always returns to one idea; that he is a victim, not a traitor."

"Well, tell her in one hour, the money shall be in the house."

"The money! What does she care?"

"Well, say we shall know all about Alfred by eleven o'clock."

"My dear friend, be prudent," said Mrs. Dodd. "I feel alarmed; you were speaking almost in a whisper when I came in."

"Ye are very obairvant: but dawnt be uneasy; we are three to one. Just go and comfort Miss Julee with my message."

"Ah, that I will," she said.

She was no sooner gone than they all stole out into the night, and a pitch dark night it was; but Green had a powerful dark lantern to use if necessary.

They waited, Green at the gate of Musgrove Cottage, the other two a little way up the road.

Ten o'clock struck. Some minutes passed without the expected signal from Green; and Edward and Sampson began to shiver. For it was very cold and dark, and in the next place they were honest men going to take the law into their own hands, and the law sometimes calls that breaking the law. "Confound him!" muttered Sampson: "if he does not soon come I shall run away. It is bitterly cold."

Presently footsteps were heard approaching; but no signal: it proved to be only a fellow in a smock frock rolling home from the public-house.

Just as his footsteps died away a low hoot like a plaintive owl was heard, and they knew their game was afoot.

Presently, tramp, tramp, came the slow and stately march of him they had hunted down.

He came very slowly, like one lost in meditation: and these amateur policemen's hearts beat louder, and louder, as he drew nearer and nearer.

At last in the blackness of the night a shadowy outline was visible: another tramp or two, it was upon them.

Now the cautious Mr. Green had stipulated

that the pocket-book should first be felt for, and, if not there, the matter should go no farther. So Edward made a stumble and fell against Mr. Hardie and felt his left breast : the pocket-book was there :—“Yes,” he whispered : and Mr. Hardie, in the act of remonstrating at his clumsiness, was pinned behind, and his arms strapped with wonderful rapidity and dexterity. Then first he seemed to awake to his danger, and uttered a stentorian cry of terror, that rang through the night and made two of his three captors tremble.

“Cut that,” said Green sternly, “or you’ll get into trouble.”

Mr. Hardie lowered his voice directly : “Do not kill me, do not hurt me ;” he murmured, “I’m but a poor man now. Take my little money ; it is in my waistcoat pocket ; but spare my life. You see I don’t resist.”

“Come, stash your gab, my lad,” said Green contemptuously, addressing him just as he would any other of the birds he was accustomed to capture : “It’s not your stiff that is wanted, but Captain Dodd’s.”

“Captain Dodd’s?” cried the prisoner with a wonderful assumption of innocence.

“Ay, the pocket-book,” said Green : “here, this ! this !” He tapped on the pocket-book, and instantly the prisoner uttered a cry of agony, and sprang into the road with an agility no one would have thought possible ; but Edward and Green soon caught him, and, the Doctor joining, they held him, and Green tore his coat open.

The pocket-book was not there. He tore open his waistcoat ; it was not in the waistcoat : but it was sewed tightly to his very shirt on the outside.

Green wrenched it away, and bidding the other two go behind the prisoner and look over his shoulder, unseen themselves, slipped the shade of his lantern.

Mr. Hardie had now ceased to struggle and to exclaim ; he stood sullen, mute, desperate ; while an agitated face peered eagerly over each of his shoulders at the open pocket-book in Green’s hands, on which the lantern now poured a narrow but vivid stream of light.

WHEN ORDER REIGNED IN WARSAW.

In the month of June, 1830, Europe was still, more or less, in the condition in which it has been placed by the Congress of Vienna. The French Revolution of 1830 had not yet burst forth, and, by its example, laid the train for the subsequent revolutions of Belgium and Poland—the one successful in its issue, the other crushed only after a long and desperate struggle. Poland then slept, or appeared to sleep. If, by secret conspiracy, materials had been already heaped together for the future conflagration, the fact was wholly unsuspected. The eventual outbreak took the Russian authorities completely by surprise, in spite of the extensive and all-comprising system of espionage which seemed to

allow no sigh to be uttered, no breath to be breathed, no thought to be conceived, report of which was not, or might not be, made to the superior powers.

At the moment of my arrival at Warsaw, whither, just at that period—the boyish impulses of a roving disposition had led me, through a singular labyrinth of zig-zag caprices—the Polish Diet, or figment of a Diet—the last which was ever assembled—was being held in that city. The Emperor and Empress of Russia, with a brilliant court, were present. The Grand-Duke Constantine, the brother of the emperor, reigned supreme in the land ; and the assemblage of the Diet, under the circumstances, was but a mockery. In fact, the constitution, which had been guaranteed to Poland, as an independent kingdom, and sworn to be observed by the Emperors of Russia, provided that the viceroyalty of the land should be always vested in a Polish nobleman of imperial appointment.

But this fundamental point, like so many other clauses in that disregarded charter, had become a nullity. Upon the decease of the last viceroy, in 1825, no steps were taken for any further choice. The post was left unfilled ; and Constantine, who had abdicated the imperial crown in favour of his younger brother Nicholas, although in truth no more than the commander of the forces in Warsaw, had repaid himself for his sacrifice by arrogating—in spite of the constitution, the laws of the country, and the oath of the emperor—the whole of the executive power in Poland. The Emperor Nicholas, who thus owed to his brother an empire, seemed to think it but fair to shut his eyes to the usurpation of a kingdom by the abdicator.

Festivities of the most varied kind, in honour of the visit of the emperor and empress, were succeeding each other, day by day, night by night. Parades or reviews generally occupied the mornings. The most extensive and brilliant of these military spectacles was the review of the whole Polish army by the Emperor Nicholas.

At dawn all Warsaw is astir in eager anticipation. The sun rises clear and glorious on the day. The whole city pours forth in carriages, in droshkas, on horseback, or on foot, to the spot on which the review is to be held—a vast sandy plain to the westward of the city. A long ridge of bald hill, gently sloping to the level of the plain, skirts a lengthy tract of land. On the brow of this slope, facing the spot which is destined to be the centre of the manoeuvres and review, is situated a gorgeous tented pavilion, to be used as a chapel for the performance of the rites of the Greek Church. It was always the policy of the Emperor Nicholas to unfurl the banner of the Greek religion—“the one, the holy, and the true,” as the Russians call it—on all state occasions ; and its blessing was to be sought on all “deeds of arms,” whether in mimic or in real war. To-day, a blessing is to be given to the emperor, to his well-beloved subjects of the kingdom of Poland, and to the army. In a

few short months, that blessing will have curdled into a curse. The emperor will be at war with those he will then call his "rebellious vassals." The kingdom will be deluged in blood. That army will be divided against itself; and fellow-soldier will deal death to fellow. But the blessing is now to be bestowed; and none know, on that glorious day of sunshine and glitter, how soon all will be darkened by the deadly smoke of cannon.

From the draped entry of the chapel, a long flight of carpeted steps leads downwards to the plain. That plain seems filled, as far as the eye can reach, with military masses—artillery, cavalry, and infantry of every arm—rank beyond rank—and still rank beyond rank again. The glittering flags, the pennons of the lancers, the sweeping feathers are flapping in the light breeze. Arms and helmets are glancing brightly in the sunshine. There is an ocean of splendour and varied colour on the plain. The slope of the hill is covered with myriads of human forms. No position can be more propitious for the countless spectators of the sight. Carriages and horses, in thick masses, stretch along the ridge of the hill, upon its summit. All the earth seems to have congregated on that spot. I am made to leave my droshka, and, by the interest of friends, and incessant appeals to the hospitality due to the foreigner, am pushed through crowded throngs, hordes of police officials, ranks of guards, that are terraced along the flight of steps, until I find myself standing in front of a corps of young cadets, and so close to the steps, as almost to be able to touch the persons, shortly to be grouped upon them. From this spot every part of the review, every person engaged, could be distinctly seen. Several successive discharges of cannon now burst forth upon the air. They act like electric shocks upon the masses. A buzz of excitement pervades that enormous crowd. There is but one thought, as every neck is stretched in one direction—"The emperor is coming!" A large body of horsemen gallop towards the foot of the steps. The emperor is at its head. He is easily recognised by the many well-known portraits of him. He dashes forward, his plumes waving in the air. He is followed by a brilliant cortége of princes, generals, aides-de-camp, staff-officers—all that is great, noble, or illustrious in Poland. Shouts of greeting rend the air. The regiments salute as he passes. The bands strike up the customary hymn, and I am startled to hear the inspiring strains of "God Save the King." I learn, with surprise, that the air is constantly used in Russia as the salute to the emperor, as well as in many parts of Germany to other royal personages, and called by its English name. The emperor springs from his horse. Almost immediately afterwards a brilliant train of equipages sweeps up to the foot of the staircase. The carriages contain the empress and her suite. The emperor hands his imperial consort down, and leads her up the steps: the rest of the court follow. Before mounting many steps the empress turns, as if impatient to see the brilliant spec-

tacle upon the plain, and pauses, spite of the pressure of the hand that would hurry her forwards, to look with a smile upon the myriads of military vassals congregated below. When the imperial pair reach the summit, the empress, with her ladies, takes up her position in an outer gallery, running round three sides of the pavilion chapel; as the Greek Church does not allow females to penetrate into the inner sanctuary where the service is performed, and obliges them to worship apart from the male devotees, and in an inferior portion of the church. All kneel: the emperor on the highest step, immediately in front of the tented place of worship; below him, the Grand-Duke Constantine, his brother; then Prince Karl of Prussia, the brother of the empress; still further below, according to their rank, in thickest masses, the generals and officers of the escort, to the last step touching the level ground. Immediately below the imperial and royal personages kneels Marshal Diebitsch, then the lion of the day, with his Turkish laurels fresh upon his brow—laurels hereafter to be withered upon other heads. He is a little stout heavy-looking man. Near him is Paskiewitz, the future *pacifier* of Poland and Prince of Warsaw, who was shortly to overshadow the renown, and win away the favours of his then illustrious rival. Below, a glittering band of military men, at that time more or less known, in all the sparkling variety of uniforms of a hundred various regiments.

At the head of each regiment is an altar—a priest before it—and, at the instant the emperor kneels, each individual of the countless mass upon the plain prostrates himself. The electrical effect of the thousands, who throng the space before St. Peter's at Rome, when the papal head of the Roman Catholic Church stretches forth his hand to bless the world from the balcony at Easter, is as nothing to that produced by this movement of an army, at the moment that the head of the so-called orthodox Greek Church himself, kneels before the altar of his faith. It has a staggering and bewildering effect. The Greek priests have begun the service in the chapel pavilion. Although every head is bowed in seeming devotion, no one appears more absorbed in the exercise of his religious duties, than the emperor. But, from time to time, he gently turns his head to glance at the lines of guards to the right and the left: and it is easy to see, that there is more of acting than reality in the attitude he assumes.

This is the first time I have seen the Emperor Nicholas. I had several opportunities, during my stay in Warsaw, and in after years, to look upon that face again. I cannot but feel that the portraits I have seen have never done justice to his extraordinary beauty. His form, tall beyond that of common men, seems perfect in its symmetry. He looks a living copy of the Apollo Belvedere. In after years, his legs shrank from their full proportions, as his body swelled. Now he appears faultless in modelling of limb. The face is one of classical beauty. The features are of the purest regularity. I stand long where I

can study his profile. His high forehead bestows a look of power and intellect. No wonder that his personality should have inspired feelings of mingled admiration, reverence, and awe, or that his people should have looked upon him, alternately, as a beneficent or an avenging spirit. The expression of the face—afterwards seen under various aspects—is calm, very calm, far too calm for real beauty: and so it remains, even when the lips smile with so much grace and blandness. But what chiefly mars the expression of the face is that cold, chilly, frosty, blue eye, which others have called “mild.” If it really be as “mild as moonbeams,” it must be those moonbeams which glance sharply and cuttingly upon the ice-blocks of the Neva. The Emperor Nicholas is said to have been a man of strong family affection, and, in moments of festive relaxation, of “infinite jest.” But, surely, that eye must have frozen all warmth of love, and given to the joke the air of chilling irony. His movements, as he shortly rises, are full of admirable dignity, and even of grace, spite of the tight prison of uniform. The prestige he influenced was naturally great. Nature had vied with destiny to place him on a lofty pinnacle. But was that uncommon form to represent the type of an Archangel or a Lucifer?

The service in the chapel-pavilion is concluded. The emperor rises from his kneeling position. At the same moment, the thick groups of officers on the steps, the overwhelming masses of men upon the plain, rise also. This simultaneous movement has an effect upon the nervous system, still more exciting and inspiring than that of the prostration. The emperor now turns, faces the plain, and bows several times, with a wave of the hand, to the army below, to the assembled people around. The cheers are deafening, and roll like thunder over the plain. The mass of uniforms upon the steps divide to form a central avenue. The emperor descends the steps, followed by his brother Constantine, Prince Karl of Prussia, and the others of his military court—according to rank. He mounts his horse again—the others follow his example—the great review commences.

Military manoeuvres and reviews have a great similitude in all countries. On this occasion, the evolutions are gone through with precision and effect. The whole body of the troops is passed in review, first in slow, then in quick time. The movement of these immense masses of men have a dazzling and giddy effect. The whole earth, before the spectators' eyes, seems moving on and on, until his brain whirls, and he fancies he must inevitably be swept onwards in the movements, and fixes his feet more firmly to the earth, which appears to be slipping from him. There seems to be but one thought uppermost in the minds of all. Around the foreigner are murmured the words: “How does the emperor look? Does he smile? Will he be pleased?” How much evidently depends upon the despot's satisfaction or dissatisfaction at the moment. I

catch sight of the unseemly face of the Grand-Duke Constantine. A deep scowl renders it even more hideous than usual. Have things gone awry? I begin to share in the anxious feelings expressed around me. It is so easy to be led away by the sentiments of the congregated mass. But no! The emperor has smiled. He waves his hand graciously. He probably expresses his satisfaction. Cheers burst forth again from the army, and are echoed by the masses of spectators on the hill. The autocrat has smiled, and all appears to be delight! The great business of the day is over. The emperor dismounts, enters a small open carriage with only two horses, accompanied by the Grand-Duke Constantine, and dashes furiously forwards. He bows, however, gracefully on all sides. Constantine still scowls. When and how were they to meet that army again? In a few months a revolution would burst forth in Poland; and the Emperor Nicholas could but confess, that its main cause was the tyranny of the grand-duke.

At no great distance to the west of the city of Warsaw was a considerable open space, which some years previously had been first appropriated to the formation of a large camp, occupied, during the summer season, by the regiments of Polish and Russian infantry that were garrisoned in Warsaw or stationed in the neighbourhood—the officers living in cottages and huts, kept in repair during the whole year—the soldiers using tents pitched each season for the purpose.

This camp covered a great circular tract of land; and the visitor, on whatever side he might arrive, after passing the several scattered outposts, came, first, upon a portion of a broad belt of open space, surrounding the whole camp, and serving as the ground for drills, parades, small manoeuvres, and reviews, and the daily exercises of public worship for each regiment, according to the portion it skirted. The great outer circle of the whole encampment was formed by this open belt; the next circular belt within was covered by the tents of the soldiers, arranged with the neatest regularity, each tent rising only like a light roof above the soil, the height of the interior being obtained by an excavation of the ground about three feet deep, and affording resting and sleeping places for ten or a dozen men. To each, a gentle slope led down at the gable end facing the exterior of the circle, and could only be entered in a crouching position. These myriads of white sail-cloth tenements, which stood three deep, were separated from each other by narrow footpaths. At intervals a broader species of street afforded access to various subdivisions; and a still broader space sundered each tented village from a similar one belonging to another regiment.

Within this thickly-dotted circle, and filling its whole interior, was a large wood of acacias, which, upon the first establishment of the camp, had been planted with great care and pains, under the direction of the officers then garrisoned at

Warsaw—the whole of the earth on which this acacia forest was intended to flourish having been brought from a considerable distance to take the place of the sandy soil of the plain. This grove was intersected by regular streets, each leading, like the spokes of a wheel, to the central point of the great round (where head-quarters were established), and counter-crossed by smaller encircling lanes for the facility of intercommunication. It would probably have afforded to the traveller in a balloon the appearance of a huge cobweb.

Skirting these streets and lanes were the dwellings of the officers. Each of these had more the appearance of a cottage ornée—a park pavilion, the plaything dairy of an English country lady, or the dear old Swiss cottage of the Colosseum—than a military barrack lodging. Each was tricked out, according to the fancy of the owner, with woodwork tracery, creeper-grown trellis-work, and similar rustic decoration, and was generally surrounded by a broad verandah in suburban villa taste. Each was placed in its own garden, decked with the gayest flowers, and cultivated with considerable care; while over all stretched the light, sprayey, dancing branches of the luxuriant acacias. The buildings belonging to superior officers generally contained four rooms. Officers of lower rank contented themselves with only sitting-room and bed-chamber. Some were even obliged to "chum" together in one little villa in fraternal equality. None of these military villas were of large proportions; but, in most cases, they were very luxuriously furnished, and adorned with nick-nacks, prettinesses of all kinds, which might have induced the mistake that the visitor had penetrated into "my lady's boudoir" rather than into a military "crib," had it not been for the inevitable pipe-stand. Never had the "pomp of war" put on so peaceful, pretty, and Watteau-berger-like an air.

Behind these dwellings of the officers, concealed as much as possible in the thickness of the wood—for the picturesque had evidently been studied in every respect, and the objects less capable of being "effective" put out of sight—stood the magazines, regimental offices, kitchens, &c. &c.; and in the centre—the great spider tenement of the gigantic cobweb—was the mansion, the only one not made of wood or canvas, which served for head-quarters, and as the temporary residence of the grand-duke whenever he visited the camp. The spider was ugly and bloated, with a very business-like and awe-inspiring air about it, and it told a plain truth, which otherwise might have been forgotten, that the whole scene was real and had a stern purpose, and was not a pretty show got up for the amusing exercise of some despot's hobby, or as an enormous theatrical decoration.

Circumstances had made me acquainted with several of the officers at that time lodging in the encampment: and to a youth, alone in a foreign land, the days passed upon this spot, amidst the

ever-varying military spectacle, were among the brightest and most pleasant of his life. The scene was one of constant animation and fanciful colour; and, when the duties of the day were over, and officers lounged and laughed in their prettily bedizened rooms, or on garden benches beneath the acacia shade, many a joyous evening was passed, pipe in mouth, around the truly Russian tea-table. At that time all cares seemed to be thrown aside; and the foreigner at least forgot, in the enjoyment of social intercourse, and when hearts were opened to one another in confidential interchange of feeling, that there might be an Iscariot in that merry group, and that the buoyancy and openness of a candid disposition might be laid before the Grand-Duke Constantine as a crime of magnitude. But suspicion and reserve are not ingredients that can easily find place in the mind of light-hearted youth.

The picture of one of these evenings rises up before me again like the mirage of the desert.

I am seated with an officer on a bench beneath one of the spreading acacias of his garden. The regiment lies to the westward of his camp; and spangles of light, shed through the flickering leaves by an evening sun, and dancing on our heads, as we laughingly discuss the last new French novel—not yet forbidden literary food for the Russian officers, as the French Revolution of July has not yet broken out, and rendered all that comes from that naughty country most suspicious contraband. Other officers are leaning over the garden railings, bowered with convolvulus, and joining in the discussion. A burst of music rises on the calm evening air. The band of the regiment to which the officers belong has struck up. It plays every evening for half an hour previously to general prayer. Everybody starts up, and lounges off as usual to the spot, whence come the wild notes of Weber's exquisite overture of *Euryanthe*, fitfully upon the light breeze. The party reach the outer wall of the camp, where they meet and greet their brother-officers of the same regiment. The regiment is drawn up in long lines, facing the acacia wood, the band in front. The setting sun behind, flings the lengthened shadows of the men along the sand, and, whilst it throws the masses into strong relief against the glowing sky beyond, glances brightly from their bayonets and their ornamented shakos. At a considerable interval from the line of the regiment, to which I am this evening on a visit, commences that of another regiment similarly drawn up. Its ranks gradually diminish in the perspective of the distance, as far as the eye can reach, until the turn of the circle hides its further continuance from sight. On the other side is a similar display.

The military spectacle, which fills the segment of the circle, visible from that spot, is the same around the whole immense circle, that forms the outer belt of the camp, until the complete circumference is filled. To the overture succeed airs from operas, waltzes, mazourkas, quadrilles. At last the regimental band plays a solemn

hymn. The moment has arrived for evening prayer. A priest advances in front of the long lines, and faces them. The soldiers uncover in the ranks. All heads are bowed. A solemn silence ensues, broken only by the heavy, monotonous voice of the officiating priest. At last the prayer is finished. The soldiers recover their arms with a clang, which seems to roll on into infinity. All is then again silence. The signal is awaited which is to dismiss the soldiers for the night. The last gleaming rim of the sun's disc smiles upon the horizon of the plain. At that moment the deep boom of a cannon comes thundering from the centre of the wood through the trees. The band strikes up a national air. The regiment is marched off the ground up one of the main avenues. The others, to the right and left, are gradually disappearing, like long serpents, into the recesses of the wood. The heavy tramp of the men continues to resound from all sides long after they have been lost to sight. Later the whole air is filled with the usual hum of the camp: and that at last is gradually stilled. The soldiers are gone to their tented holes to rest: the sentinels and outstanding pickets are alone dimly visible on the belt, or further on the plain, as the darkness gathers around.

I retreat with my friends to another of the picturesque cottages of the military colony. The tea-table is set out under the verandah. The never-failing meerschaum is in the mouth of every member of the party. Bewildered fireflies now and then strike against the lamp globe. The moon has risen on the other side of the camp, and, by degrees, sheds its still light in patches on the verandah floor. The garden is on the skirts of the wood. The white tents glimmer through the trees; the plain is flooded with moonlight beyond. Wit and sentiment have each their turn in the desultory conversation of the jovial party. Hark! the sounds of a piano from a neighbouring cottage ornée—the notes of an Italian air or French *romance* admirably sung. The young Russian officers, who generally boast of many superficial accomplishments, are frequently excellent musicians. I can almost fancy I have wandered into the land of fairy-romance, or ask myself, with wonder, "Where am I? Is this an enchanted land of peace? Is it an embodied page from a Florian tale of Bergerie? Is it a dramatic scene got up for the amusement of the evening? Is it a 'fancy' colony in some civilised back wood?"

This is a dream of days when order reigned in Warsaw, or seemed to reign. In a few months confusion, terror, bloodshed, wrath were raving, where, to the careless eye, and even, it would seem, to the most watchful eyes that served the ever-watchful Russian rule, all bore the outward semblance of splendour, security, and peace. The time was to come, in a few months, when order would reign at Warsaw, according to the proclamation of stern masters, once again—the order of suspicion, dread, and stifled groans. That time of order has lasted long and weary

years. When will the time come when Europe can acknowledge that those bitter words, "Order reigns at Warsaw," are really and indeed a truth?

TWO SEAS.

I.

A MARINER by tempest crost
Lay struggling with the wave;
His one sole hope—all else was lost—
His hoarded gold to save.

Slung from his neck—a weary weight—
His precious charge he bore;
His failing strength, at war with fate,
Could bear no feather more.

But not against his life alone
Uprose the breakers wild;
A woman, on the billows thrown,
Held up her drowning child.

"Save her!" she cried, "in mercy save!"
As through the surf she rolled:
He heard; and cast beneath the wave
His prize of Indian gold.

Fearless he breasts the tropic storm
With limbs by love new strung,
While round his neck, all soft and warm,
Two infant arms are flung.

He hails the land—the blessed land!
He drinks its spicy air;
He strains to reach its coral strand,
He greets it with a prayer.

Vainly the angry tempest raved,
His feet have touched the goal;
And, with his living burthen saved,
He stands—a rescued soul!

II.

The child has lived, bloomed, loved, and died.
Alone the old man lies;
Another sea, of stiller tide,
Steals o'er his closing eyes.

Glowes now for him no tropic light,
But, where life's waters freeze,
The glory of the Polar night—
The calm of Arctic seas!

His hard-earned gold beneath the deep
Lies hid;—but where is she,
His God-gift, whom the star-worlds keep,
His daughter of the sea?

Where cloud-waves foam the rippled skies,
Touched by the golden day,
An angel form in angel guise
Floats up the liquid way.

He follows, hushed in rapt delight,
Of dread and death beguiled,
She, swimming slow with pinions bright,
He, clinging like a child.

The dross of earth is cast away;
She leads him by the hand,
Through heaven's blue sea her white wings
play:
He nears the happy land.

She parts the wave that beats him back;
He breasts life's surge no more:
His feet, upon an angel's track,
Have touched the immortal shore!

THE POINT OF THE NEEDLE.

THERE are some cases which, the more they become tedious by frequent urging, the more it is necessary to insist upon, in season and out of season. One of them is that of the overworked milliner's girl, for whom there is no help but in the feeling and action of those whom it does not bore to be reminded that a great pitched battle is seldom more deadly to men than the gaiety of a London season is to the pale army of girls who live by the most wretched fripperies of fashion, and that fewer, perhaps, die by the bayonet than by the needle. An inquest, during this last season, on the body of a milliner's girl who had not withdrawn the wreck of her life to obscure suffering, but who, to the annoyance and regret of all right-minded employers, died ostentatiously at her work in one of the best-regulated houses in the trade, was a nine days' wonder; and during the nine days it was proper to say things that seemed good and suitable for the occasion. But, when the nine days' wonderment were over, the topic was considered stale, and in the way of talk thenceforward unfit for human food, because the talker, like the diner, must needs have his food fresh.

While the talk lasted, we learnt that, with a few exceptions, all is as it used to be twenty years since, when the evidence taken led to the formation of an "Association for the Aid and Benefit of Dressmakers and Milliners." The association had a committee of ladies of fashion who were also ladies of sense; among them the Duchesses of Sutherland and Argyll, the Countesses of Shaftesbury and Ellesmere, Lady Jocelyn, and Miss Burdett Coutts, who met weekly; and a committee of gentlemen, including Mr. Grainger, Dr. Bissett Hawkins, and Mr. Tidd Pratt. This association had an office in Clifford-street, under the management of Miss Newton, and for twelve years it laboured, insufficiently supported by the public, to induce the principals of dressmaking and millinery establishments to limit the hours of actual work to twelve a day, and to abolish Sunday work (in this latter respect it succeeded); to promote an improved ventilation of the milliners' workrooms and sleeping-rooms; to induce ladies to allow sufficient time between the order and the expected delivery of a new dress; to help with loans of money some deserving girls out of the temptations of distress; to supply on the country club principle, good and cheap medical relief; to establish also, a provident

fund, and a registry. In the year 'fifty-five Lord Shaftesbury introduced a bill for regulating hours of work in milliners' establishments; but, after receiving evidence, the committee of the House of Lords reported against it: not doubting the need of it, but questioning the power of enforcing its provisions, considering the timidity and helplessness of those for whose benefit the measure was designed. The failure of this proposal to restrict them, made employers bolder in exaction, and there was never more need of the work of the association than when, after it had done much good, chiefly for want of public support it ceased to exist. A last effort was made in 'fifty-six, at a great meeting held in Exeter Hall under the auspices of the Early Closing Association, but the men in attendance on that meeting were to women as three to one. The ladies of England never did, and do not yet, as a body, thoroughly perceive how much it rests with them to improve or maintain the unhappy condition of the milliners' workwomen. In London alone, the number of dressmakers and milliners' workwomen exceeds fifteen thousand. They commonly begin to bear the unwholesome strain upon their systems while their bodies are developing for health and sickness in their after lives. They become apprentices between the age of fourteen and sixteen; and at sixteen or seventeen they begin under the full strain of over-work to "complete their education:" working in the busy season of the year continuously for fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, or eighteen, hours a day.

It was difficult to get any girls, and almost impossible to get the older hands, to give evidence that might seriously damage them with their employers; yet more than enough was told. One witness had worked without going to bed, from four o'clock on Thursday to ten o'clock on Sunday morning. One had seen some of her companions faint two or three times a day. Though the fainting is of a deadly kind, it is so common, and the haste is so great, that girls are often left to recover as they may. One remembered a companion obliged to work till midnight, though she was unwell. "Her illness increased, and when the doctor was called in, he said she ought to have been in bed weeks ago. They did not make her work after the doctor said she could not work; she was obliged to go to bed. She never got up again, but died a week after she had advice."

There are in the season no meal hours; there are meal minutes; and Sir James Clark truly said, that "the mode of life of these poor girls is such as no constitution could long bear. A mode of life more completely calculated to destroy human health could scarcely be contrived." Mr. Dalrymple, of the Ophthalmic Hospital, testified that all forms of eye disease are produced, not seldom actual blindness, by continuous fine work carried on during so many hours by artificial light. Dr. Hodgkin testified, from his experience among many hundreds of out-patients at the London Dispensary and Guy's Hospital, that, as to milliners' girls,

"it is a frequent practice to confine them closely to work during the whole day and for a considerable part of the night; that the intervals for meals are few and short, and that relaxation and exercise are out of the question. It was, therefore, no matter of surprise to him to find this class of persons exhibiting extreme cases of those distressing nervous, hysterical, and dyspeptic afflictions which the worst debilitating causes can induce among young females. Pulmonary consumption was of frequent occurrence." Another medical practitioner, who had for twenty years been in the habit of attending workers in the millinery rooms, said he had "known numbers of young healthy women who in this way had been reduced to a permanent state of debility. Many of them die, especially of consumption. He was convinced that in no trade or manufactory whatever is the labour to be compared to that of the young dressmakers. No men work so long. It would be impossible for any animal to work so continuously with so little rest." Healthy young girls, left, often by orphanhood or domestic calamity, dependent on their own exertion for their bread, toil themselves weary, and withdraw to die, worn out before their time, or to live sickly lives, and become, perhaps, the mothers of a feeble race.

During the activity of the association there was a declaration signed—ten years ago—by the principal millinery houses, to this effect:

"We, the undersigned principals of millinery and dressmaking establishments at the West End of London, having observed in the newspapers statements of excessive labour in our business, feel called upon in self-defence to make the following public statement, especially as we have reason to believe that some of the assertions contained in the letters published in the newspapers are not wholly groundless: 1. During the greater portion of the year we do not require the young people in our establishments to work more than twelve hours, inclusive of an hour and a half for meals. From March to July we require them to work thirteen hours and a half, allowing during that time one hour's rest for dinner and half an hour's rest for tea. 2. It has been our object to provide suitable sleeping accommodation, and to avoid overcrowding. 3. In no case do we require work on Sundays, or all night. 4. The food we supply is of the best quality, and unlimited in quantity."

But, a member of the committee on Lord Shaftesbury's bill says: "We had very sufficient reason for believing that the hours were not kept. One letter I have before me, the writer of which says that he cannot give his name. He is a retired officer in her Majesty's service; he has three daughters employed in this way; he dares not give his name, because he says they would lose their position by it, but he assures me that the degree of oppression and tyranny that is maintained over them has completely injured their health, and that that arrangement itself has been altogether disregarded. It is not merely upon

a single testimony that we have come to that conclusion, but we made inquiries, from which we believe that at least nine of those houses which signed that agreement, have broken the agreement, and that their hours vary from fourteen to seventeen hours a day." Some heads of houses "refused to sign it, because they said the trade would not allow of its being carried out, and that they would not sign what they said they felt they conscientiously could not do."

And so, after all the good promises, backed, we believe, with really good intentions, here is an interior view of milliners' life as described by one who made the plunge into it, and withdrew only half-killed, with a resolve to try no more. The case was published in the season to which it referred, by Mr. Lilwall, the active honorary secretary of the Early Closing Association:

"I was born in London. My father, who was a goldsmith and jeweller, is a Frenchman; my mother was an Englishwoman. I was apprenticed at Madame —, in — Street, London. We never worked after nine o'clock in the evening at this establishment, but our hour of commencing was usually seven o'clock, sometimes as early as six, with just enough time to take our meals—no more. After this I took a situation as governess at a school at Edmonton, where I remained till the establishment was broken up. I then went to stay at —, where I remained about seven weeks, when I took a situation at Madame —, in — Street, London. This was on the 1st of April, 1856. I was to have ten pounds for the 'Season,' with my board and lodging. I was informed the season terminated at the beginning, or possibly the end of August.

"The first week I was there, we began work at eight in the morning, and worked till between eleven and twelve o'clock at night. There was no fixed time for meals; we had to take them as fast as we could, and return to the workroom directly we had finished. The second week there was a drawing-room. We worked on Tuesday till twelve o'clock, and on Wednesday we continued at it till between three and four o'clock on the following morning. We then went to bed, but had to begin work again at eight o'clock, and continued at it till twelve. The following day (Friday) we worked from eight till between eleven and twelve o'clock at night. We always breakfasted before we began work—that is, before eight o'clock. The third week, we worked sometimes till one o'clock in the morning; sometimes only till twelve o'clock at night. The fourth week, it was much the same, till Friday, when we commenced work, as usual, at eight o'clock, and went on till between four and five on the following morning. It was near five when we went to our bedrooms. During the day we had our meals as usual. At midnight we had a cup of coffee brought us. I am sure something improper was put into it to keep us awake, as when we went to bed none of us could sleep, which was invariably the case after having coffee at midnight; whereas the coffee which was given us those nights when we could retire to bed at eleven or twelve o'clock never pro-

duced this effect. The young lady who lay with me said, on the particular morning referred to, 'What shall we do till eight o'clock, as we cannot get to sleep?' We walked about the room till six o'clock, when I went out and called upon my sister at —. The other young persons (with the exception of one who managed to sleep an hour or so) endeavoured to employ themselves, some by writing, others by looking over their boxes, and such-like, till breakfast; after which we continued working till twelve o'clock. This was Saturday night. Five of us occupied one bedroom. The apartment was very small and close—very close—and not clean. The ceiling was so low, that when I stood upright, tiptoe, I could, by a slight additional movement of the body upwards, touch it with my hand. We were so crowded, moreover, that we could not all move about and dress at one time; and what made it still worse, it adjoined another room in which two others slept. These young persons were so cramped for space, that they literally could scarcely move. They were obliged to have the door kept open that led into our room, or they must have been stifled, as there was no other way of their getting air. We were thus, as it were, seven persons sleeping in one apartment. In their little room there was no fireplace; in ours there was, but there was a chest of drawers against it, for which there was no space in any other part of the room.

"As I have before said, on the Saturday of my fourth week's residence in this establishment, we left off work at twelve o'clock at night. I made up my mind that I would not work later that night, come what would. Indeed, I felt that I could not do another stitch. During the afternoon and evening, as it was, I had to leave the workroom several times, to try to get relief by drinking, and by washing my face and forehead with cold water. We also had a smelling-bottle on the table, or we never could have kept awake. After retiring to my bedroom, I was in such a feverish state as to be obliged to apply wet linen to my head. On the Sunday morning, when I awoke, my tongue was so swollen that I could not speak. My eyes, also, were so bad that I could not see; and I was obliged to be helped out of bed. I afterwards managed, with great difficulty, to get to my uncle's, the distance not being far, or I could not have walked. He desired me to leave my situation at once, and would not allow me to go back to stay. I returned, however, in the afternoon, and told Madame — of my determination to leave her. She said it was disgraceful on my part to do so, as I had engaged for the season. Oh, I should have told you that we had, had I remained, the pleasant, or rather unpleasant, prospect of working all the following Monday night, as the sister of the principal had said on the Saturday evening, 'I hope, young ladies, you will come in early on Sunday night; for we shall have little or no rest till Wednesday morning,' meaning that we should have to work, the fifth week of my stay there, the whole of Monday and Tuesday nights. But fearing, as I have reason to sup-

pose, after what had transpired the previous night, that the state of things in their establishment would be exposed, the principal, her sister and niece, themselves worked the whole of Sunday, by which means the necessity for working all Monday and Tuesday nights being removed, the young ladies, as I afterwards learnt, left off each of those nights at twelve o'clock. . . . I went on the following Wednesday for my boxes, when I was treated very rudely by Monsieur —, who said that I had run away on the Sunday, being afraid of the day's work on the Monday. I replied that, as long as I had remained there, I had done my duty; and as during that period I had worked at night, I had proved that I was not afraid of *day* work, and that I had left his establishment as honourably as I had entered it. He refused to pay me, and otherwise acted most unkindly. Indeed, he went on in a most scandalous manner. I was so hurt in my feelings, that, but for my sister, I should not have applied again for the money due to me. I have, however, since been paid. . . . I am very sorry I ever entered the dressmaking business. . . . I feel very unwell. My doctor told me that I am naturally of a strong constitution, and have only been made ill through my suffering in business. Another young lady from —, aged eighteen, entered the same establishment about three years ago in good health, and after being there six months she became seriously ill from over-work; and not being allowed to remain in the house, she was taken to the hospital, where she died within three weeks, having only one friend in London, who was not made acquainted with the poor girl's illness till too late to remove her. Numbers of others from — (the place where the principals of the house came from) have also been obliged, through illness, to return home, where, after lingering a short time, they have died the victims of over-work in the same establishment. . . . The young people are always complaining among themselves in the workroom, but have not courage to do so to Madame. The same people have another establishment at —, the arrangements of which are, I hear, much worse than even those of the London one. They employ them there constantly, during the season, till four o'clock in the morning, and often on Sunday as well.

"I believe the case that I have narrated respecting myself is by no means an exceptional one; there are numerous other London establishments quite as bad, and even worse."

There has been no substantial change for the better in the condition of milliners' hands for the last quarter of a century. The narrative we have here quoted in full, is still a true picture of many houses, but not of all; not of the best; not of that against which the death of a workwoman produced recent clamour. In all good milliners' houses, a really good table is kept, there is a kindly fellow-feeling between employers and employed, who eat together, work together, think together. As a general rule, fortunes are not made in the millinery business, and employers are not fattening upon the

lives of the poor girls who work for them; nor are the girls themselves disposed to much active complaint. Like thousands of others in many different vocations, they accept ills incident to their way of life which they believe inevitable parts of it, are sensitive of interference, and even disposed to resent as humiliating any sympathy that holds them up for public pity, or suggests that they are "slaves." A public outcry over their condition is, in fact, more offensive to the majority of the young ladies themselves than even to their employers.

And now let us try to come to the root of the evil. The main fault is not in the employing milliners who, except a few prosperous firms, themselves live but a poor, honest, hand-to-mouth life, struggling as hard to keep out of the Bankruptcy Court as many of their girls struggle for bread. Unable to find capital where-with to buy on profitable terms, and with their prices kept down by sharp competition, there is a great body of employing milliners who earn most honourably and laboriously a bare subsistence with the help of their "young ladies." The profits of a few court milliners may, on the whole, possibly tend to wealth, but the business, as now constituted, is one which few women would follow by choice, if more ways existed by which an average woman's wit and industry were free to earn her livelihood.

We are not disposed to say hard things of the employing dressmakers. There are some sordid and mean women and men in every calling, and there is everywhere a hard struggle for bread that sometimes makes the generous of heart seem grasping. Nor are we more disposed to say hard things of the dressmakers' customers. We concede them their wish to wear at any time the dress that is in fashion. Every well-constituted woman shrinks reasonably enough from making herself conspicuous by an exceptional costume. At present, nobody knows in April what will be, for occasions of full dress, the costume required of her in May. A lady is forbidden by the sudden freaks of a despotic fashion to order a dress many days before the day when it is wanted. And if she does her best, and gives her dressmaker even a fortnight's notice of the want of a court dress, La Mode has established the propriety of dresses so expansive and so flimsy, that the dressmaker thinks it necessary to send them home with the bloom on, at the moment when they are to be worn, as the fruiterer sends in his peaches at the moment when they are to be eaten. Much as they are squeezed and tumbled at the drawing-room, they must not even be folded before it. Wardrobes are not yet constructed to contain unfolded dresses of the modern style. If the wardrobes were built to the dresses, the houses would have to be built to the wardrobe. This the dressmaker knows, and is unwilling to trust a lady with the custody of her own drawing-room or ball-dress, until almost the hour when she must put it on.

That is one difficulty. The other is that the gay season of London lasts only for about four

months. Upon the honey she then makes, a respectable dressmaker now tries to keep her bees together all the year. The house in which this season's scandal arose, and every good house of its class, keeps all its in-door workwomen in receipt of wages for more regular and reasonable hours of work during the whole slack time. As the trade is now constituted, such houses are only enabled to do this by submitting to a fearful press of overwork during the season.

There are two classes of milliners' hands, the in-door and the out-of-door workwomen. The out-of-door workers are taken on or dismissed as may be necessary; their greater independence and freedom makes them a healthier class, but their position is very precarious, and they are, in their days of want, largely exposed to an often irresistible temptation. Their morality, therefore, is usually lower than that of the in-door workers. Many of the in-door milliners' girls, young ladies of middle rank by birth, give up, in terrible over-work for a third part of their year, almost their lives for a safe though bitterly poor independence and the maintenance of honour; and they perfectly well understand the nature of their bargain, nor do they see how customers or employers—in the better class of houses—could materially better its conditions.

And we ourselves fairly confess that we see no remedy but Revolution. The true blot was hit by a dressmaking witness, before one of the committees, who said that if it were possible to spread the work over the year, the trade would be very good and comfortable; but this could not be done, because it was impossible to foretell changes of mode. But why in the name of taste and common sense should we submit to that preposterous impossibility? Who is this tyrant, Mode? The men of England have had their own sensible revolutions; now let us have a revolt of Englishwomen against French domination, and let them set up and pay worthy homage to, a Court of Fashion of their own. It is no question about trifles of fashion; it is a question of life and happiness to thousands whether we shall submit to all the sudden freaks of very bad French taste, or whether we shall some time set up an honest and reasonable standard of our own. England was never happier than she now is in her sovereign. We have also the feminine care over the expected gaieties of a court, now entrusted to a young princess, frank, lively, sensible, and very popular, to whom there would be gladly conceded leadership in all matters of female fashion. But even the princess could not, single-handed and by mere influence of example, overcome the tyranny of an old usage, still less could she supply for us the need there is of a few months' notice in anticipation of each change of fashion. Let a few women of rank and fashion, with a right sense of true elegance—who might accept honourable service in the matter upon nomination of her Majesty—form, with the princess at their head, a little Committee of Taste, empowered to revise the fashions of court dress, and able by their influence and example in society to make their decrees more

valid than those of the wretched and unknown designers of monstrosity. Englishwomen would all gladly follow a good lead. Many a good woman in middle life would be saved from ruining her husband by mockery of the extravagance and folly of the female court of France—which has a great deal in it not desirable to be imitated anywhere.

As for the general chances of bread-winning by girls or young women in London, they scarcely promise the half-loaf that is better than no bread. While the daughters of a respectable mechanic are yet young they may add to the family income; but when it comes, later in life, to self-support by bugling, or bead-work, embroidery, feather-trimming, chenille and hair or silk net-making, blonde-joining, cap-making, dressmaking, it is all dreary and almost hopeless struggle. Changes of fashion sometimes throw the girls out of employ. Buglers who used to advertise for hundreds of hands are now themselves bankrupt. We have met with one woman whose sole occupation was to make the cockades or rosettes with which the carriage horses of the polite world are adorned on the days of the Queen's drawing-rooms, and other important state occasions. She was a person of unsteady habits, but, when she chose to work, could earn with ease three or four pounds a week in the season. No one could be found by the harness-makers so well able to give style and fashion to those ornaments.

In an ill-ventilated room in a dark alley in the east of London, we have seen a woman and seven children, boys and girls, engaged in making birdeages. The woman's husband, who had been in this trade, was dead, and, after his death, she went on with the labour. One child cut the thin wood into proper shapes, the woman with singular rapidity fixed the slips together, others prepared the wires and put them into their right position, others were engaged in polishing and finishing the work. But, notwithstanding all these efforts, their income was miserably small. The woman had no capital. At times the dealers became overstocked with cages; then, such was the need of the family, that it was necessary to sell them for any sum that might be offered.

In several neighbourhoods many women and young girls make a scanty income by the French-polishing of furniture, barometer-cases, and the like. Print and map-colouring is also a kind of work, on which, notwithstanding the large quantity of colour-printing now done by machinery, many females are employed. In this way, often in miserable rooms, father, mother, and all the children who are able, work at a large table. The most skilful tint the faces, hands, and other delicate parts of figures; others colour the blue, red, green, and other portions of the drapery, backgrounds, &c., so that when a print has been passed round the board, the colouring is finished. There are various forms of this work; that which requires artistic ability is the best paid for; but in the homes of most print-colourers, even when well employed, there is evidently

great distress. The work, too, is, for the most part, uncertain. Towards Valentine's-day and Christmas there is generally a rush of business; at other periods, the families dependent on such work are often brought to the brink of starvation. Yet the persons thus engaged do not think of combining this with other work, or putting their children, either boys or girls, to trades by which they might obtain a better income. The artificial flower-workers are not much better circumstanced, and among the tailors, especially those who are engaged in sloop work and in making clothes for the use of the army, such is the competition (particularly since the introduction of the sewing-machine), that by the produce of his own labour a man cannot exist; he is obliged, therefore, to use the assistance of his wife and daughters. Even very little children toil early and late; and, when all this work is done, the week's wages are often not so much as twenty shillings.

In a small unwholesome room, in a house crowded with people, we have found a widow, well educated and once in good circumstances, with three daughters between fourteen and twenty years of age, who struggled to live by the making of boys' caps. Their whole income, one week with the other, was under twelve shillings. The rent of their room was half-a-crown a week. In the eastern districts of the metropolis, in the neighbourhood of the docks, and by the river-side, there are many females engaged in making coal, corn, and other sacks. This is a rough, hard, and ill-paid work.

Women and girls also sort bristles, and make them into packets for the brush-makers. Any one quick at this, could earn from nine shillings to eleven shillings a week. In some dismal places we have seen women making flowers into bouquets. In apartments, the condition of which it is sad to think of, without furniture, the walls mouldy and rotten, women and children are to be seen chopping firewood. Sometimes they have no wood to chop; then there is distress indeed. A little while ago, the binding of boots and shoes used to be a fair means of employment for women; this is now chiefly done by machinery, and it is to be noticed that in various ways the employment of women is being removed from their own homes into workrooms and manufactories, where they are decently paid.

Many young girls are engaged in folding envelopes; but for this work, steam-machinery has also been brought into use. Many young females assist in the bookbinding business, in the packing-rooms of pickling warehouses, and in several kinds of manufactories. In connexion with the great fruit and vegetable markets of the metropolis, women and girls are employed in larger or smaller numbers according to the season; but this is a very uncertain means of livelihood. Female compositors in printing-offices, female copying-clerks, and, if possible, female hair-dressers, are to be tried and talked of. Clearly, however, it will be long before there will be for a self-dependent orphan girl any safe and good

refuge from the necessity of living by instruction of the young, domestic service, or the needle.

CASE FOR THE PROSECUTION.

I WAS staying out of town by the sea, where I always do my own marketing; and, as the buttermen made a little funnel of paper in which to enclose my two new laid eggs, I saw a roll of yellow manuscript in faded ink lying in the drawer. "What's that?" I asked. "Waste," he replied. "May I look at it?" "Welcome;" and he brought it out. A large roll of extra-size law-paper, marked outside, "Old Bailey, July Session, 1782, Middlesex. The King against George Weston and Joseph Weston, for felony. Brief for the prosecutor."

"Where did you get this?" I asked. "Come with the rest," he said; "pounds of it down stairs; nigh enough to fill my back cellar!" It was very tempting. I had no books save the half-dozen I had brought with me, and which I knew by heart; the evenings were dull and showery; I was getting horribly bored for want of something to read. "Will you sell me this roll of paper?" said I. "No; I'll gie 'em to ye," was his spirited response.

I carried the roll of paper home, and saw my landlady glance at it with undisguised horror as she observed it under my arm. Then, after I had dined, and the evening, as usual, had turned out showery, and nobody was left on the esplanade save the preventive man, wrapped in his oilskin coat, wearing his sou'-wester hat, and always looking through his telescope for something which never arrived, I lighted my reading candles, feathered with the corpses of self-immolated moths, and proceeded to look over my newly-found treasure. Very old, very yellow, very flyblown. Here is the heading of the first side: "Old Bailey. July Session, 1782. For Felony. Brief for the prosecution" (each item underscored), in the left hand corner. In the right hand, and kept together by a pen and ink coupling figure, "The King——" (so grand that they could not put anybody else in the same line, and are obliged to fill it up with a long stroke) "against George Weston, o'rwise Samuel Watson, and Joseph Weston, o'rwise Joseph Williams Weston, o'rwise William Johnson." Then follow six-and-twenty counts of indictment, and then comes the "case" whence I cull the facts of the story I am about to tell.

Between two and three o'clock on the morning of Monday, the 29th of January, 1781, the mail-cart bringing what was called the Bristol mail, with which it had been laden at Maidenhead, and which it should eventually have deposited at the London General Post-office, then in Lombard-street, was jogging easily along towards Cranford Bridge, between the eleventh and twelfth milestone, when the postboy, a sleepy-

headed and sickly young fellow (he died very shortly after the robbery), was wakened by the sudden stopping of his horses. Opening his eyes, he found himself confronted by a single highwayman, who presented a pistol at his head, and bade him get down from the cart. Half asleep, and considerably more than half terrified, the boy obeyed, slipped down, and glared vacantly about him. The robber, seeing some indecision in his young friend's face, kindly recalled him to himself by touching his forehead with the cold barrel of the pistol, then ordered him to return back towards Cranford Bridge, and not to look round if he valued his life. Such a store did the poor boy place upon this commodity, which even then was daily slipping from him, that he implicitly obeyed the robber's directions, and never turned his head until he reached the post-office at Hounslow, where he made up for lost time by giving a lusty alarm.

Hounslow Heath being at that time a very favoured spot for highway robberies, it was by no means uncommon for the denizens of Hounslow town to be roused out of their beds with stories of attack. On this occasion, finding that the robbers had had the impudence to lay their sacrilegious hands on his Majesty's mail, the Hounslowians turned out with a will, and were speedily scouring the country in different directions. Those who went towards the place where the boy had been stopped, hit upon the right scent. They tracked the wheels of the cart on the road leading from the great high road to Heston, and thence to the Uxbridge road, a short distance along that road towards London, and then along a branch road to the left leading to Ealing Common, about a mile from which, in a field at a distance of eight or ten miles from where the boy was robbed, lay the mail cart, thrown on its side and gutted of its contents. The bags from Bath and Bristol for London had been rifled, many of the letters had been broken open, the contents taken away, and the outside covers were blowing about the field. About twenty-eight letter-bags had been carried off bodily; some distance down the field was found the Reading letter-bag, rifled of its contents. Expresses were at once sent off to head-quarters, consternation in the City was very great, and advertisements, giving an account of the robbery and offering a reward, were immediately printed and distributed throughout the kingdom.

About nine o'clock on Tuesday morning, the 30th of January (before any account of the robbery could have arrived at Nottingham), a post-chaise rattled into the yard of the Black Moor's Head in that town, and a gentleman in a naval uniform alighted and requested to be shown to a room. In this room he had scarcely settled himself, before he rang the bell, and despatched the waiter to the bank of Messrs. Smith to obtain cash for several Bristol bills which he handed to him. Messrs. Smith declining these bills without some further statement, the gentleman in the naval uniform started

forth himself, and called at the counting-house of Messrs. Wright, old-established bankers in Nottingham, where he requested cash for a bank-post bill, No. 11,062, dated 10th January, 1781, payable to Matthew Humphrys, Esq., and duly endorsed by Matthew Humphrys, but by no one else. Mr. Wright, the senior partner, peered over his gold spectacles at the gentleman in the naval uniform, and wished to know if he were Mr. Humphrys? As the naval gentleman replied in the negative, Mr. Wright requested him to endorse the bill, which the naval gentleman did, writing "James Jackson" in rather feeble and illiterate scrawl, but receiving cash for his bill. Immediately on his return to the hotel, the naval gentleman ordered a post-chaise and left Nottingham on an agreeable trip to Mansfield, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Leeds, Wakefield, Tadcaster, York, Northallerton, Darlington, Durham, Newcastle, and Carlisle; at each and every one of which places—such were his needs—the naval gentleman had to go to the bankers, and obtain cash for bills which he presented. Leaving Carlisle he departed by the direct road for London, and was not heard of for some days.

But so soon as the government advertisement arrived in Nottingham, the ingenious Mr. Wright was suddenly struck with an idea, and concluded (by a remarkable exercise of his intellectual forces) that the naval gentleman and the robber of the mail-cart were one and the same person. So he caused handbills descriptive of the naval gentleman's appearance to be printed and circulated, and he sent out several persons in pursuit of the purloiner of his hundred pounds. Amongst other places, a number of handbills were sent to Newark by stage-coach on Thursday, the 1st of February, addressed to Mr. Clarke, the postmaster, who also kept the Saracen's Head Inn. Unfortunately, this parcel was not opened until about noon on Friday, the 2nd of February; but the moment Mr. Clarke read one of the notices, he recollects that a gentleman in naval uniform had, about four hours before, arrived from Tuxford at his house in a chaise and four, had got change from him for a bank-note of 25*l.*, and had immediately started in another chaise and four for Grantham.

Now, was a chance to catch the naval gentleman before he reached London, and an instant pursuit was commenced, but the devil stood his friend so far, for he reached town about three hours before his pursuers. His last change was at Enfield-highway, whence a chaise and four carried him to town, and set him down in Bishopsgate-street between ten and eleven on Friday night. The postboys saw him get into a hackney-coach, taking his pistols and portmanteau with him; but they could not tell the number of the coach, nor where he directed the coachman to drive.

Having thus traced the highwayman to London, of course no one could then dream of taking any further steps towards his apprehension without consulting "the public office, Bow-

street," in the matter; and at the public office, Bow-street, the affair was placed in the hands of one Mr. John Clark, who enjoyed great reputation as a clever "runner." Mr. John Clark's first act was to issue a reward for the appearance of the hackney-coachman—an act which was so effectual that, on Monday morning, there presented himself at Bow-street, an individual named James Perry, who said that he was the coachman in question, and deposed that the person whom he had conveyed in his coach the Friday night preceding was one George Weston, whom he well knew, having been a fellow-lodger of his at the sign of the Coventry Arms, in Potter's-fields, Tooley-street, about four months ago. He also said that Weston ordered him to drive to the first court on the left hand in Newgate-street, where he set him down, Weston walking through the court with his portmanteau and pistols under his arm. Further information than this, James Perry could not give. On Tuesday, the 6th of February, a coat and waistcoat, similar to those worn by the naval gentleman implicated in these transactions, were found in "Pimlico river, near Chelsea Waterworks," by one John Sharp; and, finally, Mr. Clark, of the public office, Bow-street, in despair at his want of success, advertised George Weston by name. But, although a large number of notes and bills were "put off" or passed between that time and the month of November, not the least trace could be had of him. Mr. Clark, of the public office, Bow-street, owned himself done at last, and so, in the pleasant round of highway robberies, footpaddies, burglaries, and murders, the affair was almost forgotten.

In the middle of the month of October, a gentleman, dressed (of course) in the height of the mode, entered the shop of Messrs. Elliott and Davis, upholsterers, in New Bond-street, accompanied by an intimate friend, whom he addressed as Mr. Samuel Watson. The gentleman's own name was William Johnson; he had, as he informed the upholsterers, recently taken a house and some land near Winchelsea, and he wished them to undertake the furnishing of his house. The upholsterers, like cautious tradesmen, requested "a reference," which Mr. Johnson at once gave them in Mr. Hanson, a tradesman, residing also in New Bond-street. Mr. Hanson, on being applied to, said that Mr. Johnson had bought goods of him to the amount of 70*l.*, and had paid ready money. Messrs. Elliott and Davis were perfectly satisfied, and professed their readiness to execute Mr. Johnson's orders. Mr. Johnson's orders to the upholsterers were to "let him have everything suitable for a man of 500*l.* a year, an amount which he possessed in estates in Yorkshire, independent of the allowance made to him by his father, who had been an eminent attorney in Birmingham, but had retired upon a fortune of 2000*l.* a year." Elliott and Davis took Mr. Johnson at his word, and completed the order in style; then, about the middle of January, the junior partner started for Winchelsea, and took

the bill with him. Like a prudent man he put up at the inn, and made inquiries about his debtor. Nothing could be more satisfactory. Mr. Johnson lived with the best people of the county; Mr. Johnson went everywhere, and was a most affable, liberal, pleasant gentleman. So when Mr. Davis saw Mr. Johnson, and that affable gentleman begged him, as a personal favour, to defer the presentation of his little account until March, he at once concurred, and returned to London, to give Elliott a glowing account of his reception, and to inspire him with certain amount of jealousy that he—Elliott—had not taken the account himself. March came, but Johnson's money came not: instead thereof a letter from Johnson, stating that his rents would be due on the 25th of that month, that he did not like to hurry his tenants, but that he would be in town the first or second week in April, and discharge the bill. Reading this epistle, Elliott looked stern, and was secretly glad he had *not* been to Winchelsea; while Davis, glancing over it, was secretly sorry he had said so much.

While the partners were in this state, in the second week in April, no money having in the mean time been forthcoming, enter to them a neighbour, Mr. Timothy Lucas, jeweller, who gives them good day, and then wants to know their opinion of one Mr. Johnson, of Winchelsea. "Why?" asked the terrified upholsterers. Simply because he had given their firm as reference, to the jeweller, who had already sold him, on credit, goods to the amount of 130*l.*, and had just executed an order for 800*l.* worth of jewellery, which was then packed and ready to be sent to Winchelsea. Now, consternation reigned in New Bond-street. Johnson's debts to Elliott and Davis were above 370*l.*; to Lucas above 130*l.*; immediate steps must be adopted; so writs were at once taken out, and the London tradesmen, accompanied by a sheriff's officer, set out to Winchelsea to meet their drafter.

Early on Monday morning, the 15th of April, as they passed through Rye, on their way, they observed Mr. Johnson and his intimate friend, Mr. Samuel Watson, coming towards them on horseback, escorting a chariot within which were two ladies, and behind which was a groom on horseback. Davis the trusting, conscious of having temporarily nourished a snake in his upholstering bosom, pointed out Johnson to the sheriff's officer, who immediately rode up to arrest him, and was as immediately knocked down by Johnson with the butt-end of his riding-whip. The tradesmen rushed to their officer's assistance, but Johnson and Watson beat them off; and Watson, drawing a pistol, swore he would blow their brains out. This so checked the upholstering ardour, that Johnson and Watson managed to escape, returned in great haste to Winchelsea, where they packed their plate and valuables, and made off at full speed across country, leaving directions for the ladies to follow them to London in the chariot.

Clearly the London tradesmen were nonplussed; clearly the thing for them to do, was, to consult with the mayor and principal tradesmen of the town; clearly the place for the consultation was the coffee-room of the Nag's Head. In a corner of this coffee-room lay a ne'er-do-well, a pothouse loiterer, a taproom frequenter, a man with the reputation of having once had brains which he had muddled away with incessant brandy-and-water. "Jack" he was called, and, if he had one peculiarity besides brandy-and-water, which was scarcely a peculiarity in Rye, it was his intense interest in all criminal matters. So, the tradesmen talked, and Jack listened, until they had given a description of the person of Mr. William Johnson, when Jack went away to the den which he called home, and, returning, requested to hear Mr. Johnson's appearance again described. Mr. Davis, the junior partner, looking upon Jack as a harmless lunatic, complied with the request. Jack gave a yell of delight, and producing from under his ragged coat, the handbill issued from the public office, Bow-street, speedily showed that Mr. Johnson, of Winchelsea, and George Weston, the mail-robber, were one and the same person.

No sooner proved, than action taken. Off goes an express to the post-office. Mr. John Clark is torn from the bosom of his family and summoned to the public office, whence he despatches trusty satellites, with the result that Mr. Johnson, with his intimate friend Mr. Watson, are traced from various places to an hotel in Noel-street, near Wardour-street, Soho, where they slept on Tuesday night. Early on Wednesday morning, indefatigable Mr. John Clark, duly apprised, is at the door of the Noel-street hotel, relates to the landlord his errand, and requests the landlord's assistance: which the landlord refuses. Clark sends a bystander off to Bow-street for assistance, and the landlord proceeds to caution his guests, who immediately take alarm, and come slouching down stairs with their hands in their pockets. Clark, who is standing at the door, does not like their attitude, thinks it safest to let them pass, but as soon as they are fairly in the street, gives the alarm, "Stop thief! Stop mail robbers!" Out rushes a crowd in hot pursuit—pursuit which is temporarily checked by Messrs. Johnson and Watson each producing a brace of pistols, and firing three shots at their followers; but at last they are both captured.

So far my yellow-leaved, flyblown, faded brief-sheets, which tell me, moreover, that George Weston and Joseph Weston are the Johnson and Watson of the Winchelsea drama; that they will be proved to be brothers; that George Weston will be proved to be the highwayman and Joseph the receiver; and that there is a perfect cloud of witnesses ready to prove every indictment. I suppose they did prove it, for, turning back to the first outside folio, I find, in a different handwriting and a later ink, "Guilty"—to be hanged at Tyburn—May 3; and later still I see an ink cross, which, from

official experience, I know to be a record that the last memorandum had been carried out, and that the papers might be put by.

PARIS PICTURE AUCTIONS.

THE number of pictures sold at the Hôtel Drouot in Paris, in the course of a season, is about ten thousand. I have the printed catalogues of eight thousand two hundred and forty-five, put up two years ago. But these are not all the catalogues of that year, and not all the canvases, panels and mill-boards, by any means are catalogued; so that the round estimate just given is, probably, some hundreds under rather than a single daub over the mark. Last year there went as many, this year as many or more are going. The demand since 1856 has been on the increase, and the supply keeps pace with it as regularly as though products of the soil or loom, and not of the brush, were in question. This working of an economic law in the department of the fine arts is the more noteworthy, in that it applies to the manufactures of dead as well as of living geniuses. Not that all this merchandise in oils and colours can be charged to the account of genius. Of the whole stock many indeed are admirable, many are abominable, and more are neither very praiseworthy nor blameworthy. There are specimens of all times, styles and schools, from high historic to low Dutch, from primary and ante-pre-Raphaelite to 1863—not to say later. For there are youths, like Post-gamboge, who paint, as Herr Wagner composes music, for the future—mostly in high distemper. Their cutting contempt of the present and their prospective pretensions, remind one of the charlatan's razors, warranted to shave two days under the skin.

What is best, as well as most abundantly represented, however, at the Hotel, is contemporary French art. It is not extravagant to say that from the exhibitions there, of any one late past or of the passing season, a selection could be made, not only more extensive and more completely illustrative of French living artists, but on the whole more beautiful than the very fine but imperfect gallery of the Luxembourg. At a great interval, measured by numbers, but worthily next on the modern side, come the Belgians. The Germans—except the frequent ones who have studied in Paris, or still live and work here more or less in the French manner—are not greatly called for. Scarcely ten in the ten thousand are English—I mean, brought direct from across the Channel. The explanation of this would seem to lie rather in the high ruling prices of islanders' oil works at home, than in French dislike for English art; since English engravings, both modern and elderly, whether after British or foreign originals, are much sought for by cismarine collectors. Twice, in the bundle of catalogues above mentioned, I find the hard-pressed editorial expert attributing an atrocious daub to "Hogart." How the great satirist had smiled

at reading, and at seeing, the letter-press, and its correspondent botch on canvas! French of the last century and early part of this, occupy large spaces on the Drouotian walls. The old Italian and Spanish—mainly Italian—masters, with their endless train of pupils, imitators and copyists, mostly of the undoubtedly original varieties, are plenty as beggars in Rome, or ragamuffaroni in Naples. Likenesses of Venetian signors and canals, landscapes unlike anything in nature, sacred subjects treated profanely, improper females mythologically and martyrologically labelled, masculine saints ugly as sinners—over all a general dispensation of dirt, liquorice-juice, and varnish of different schools; but every here and there true gold amid the rusty mass of base metal, veritable pearls among the oyster-shells. Along with these in quantity, surpassing them, in their kind and on the whole, by quality, come the Hollanders and Flemings. These last, whether they worked in landscape, marines, figures or still-life, are in great and growing vogue.

Monsieur Laneuville, one of the best approved professional experts of old paintings in Paris, whose father too was a Gamaliel expert, a quite elderly gentleman now, who has lived through almost as many revolutions of dilettantism as of political régimes—between which, by the way, as intimate as curious relations are discoverable, having again their common relations in and with notable phenomena in the literature of France of the last past fifty years—Monsieur Laneuville, I say, tells me that the favour of the day is much less inclined than formerly to the large and classic Italian styles of art. The prevalent modern tendency is to realism, which though it is apt to degenerate to love of excessive detail on one side, and to mere vulgarity of subject and execution on the other, is mainly good. There is an accompanying tendency to exclusive specialities that are in a sort mechanical or of detail. Thus, the mere colour-seeker flouts drawing and expression. Another pays twelve thousand francs for a Meissonier, not because it is perfectly drawn and harmoniously coloured, or because it does or does not convey a thought or sentiment, but because of its microscopic size. Were its square inches multiplied into feet, I really believe that it might bring (with such a man) but the square root of its price. The changes of fashion in respect of art are as marked, and apparently as capricious, as in the matter of women's bonnets or men's coats. They might be made the theme of an instructive and even entertaining essay, for the study of which the Hotel offers a mine of documentary matter.

The sums paid for the ten thousand vary extremely and meanly, all the way from two or three or less francs for as many or more pieces put up in a lot, to hundreds of thousands of francs for one chef-d'œuvre. The last figure and style are much rarer than the first.

The highest figures recorded in the annals of our Institution, which was then situate on the Place de la Bourse, and known as the Hotel

Bouillon, were reached on the 19th of May, 1852, by the *Conception*, attributed to Murillo. It now hangs in the Square Saloon at the Louvre, where it is popularly stood before and admired for its beauty—and its price, five hundred and eighty-six thousand francs.

That was a great day, the day of its going. Veterans of the Hotel feel it an honour to have been present, and garrulously report its incidents, as who should say, *Magna pars fui*. The room was crowded and deoxygenated to the last degree of breathable unfragrance. How the emotion of the House rose with the titanic gradation of bids to the topmost holding-place of exaltation, if you have been an auction follower, you may imagine; if not you can't; and don't try, as I will not to describe. And how depict the finely-frenzied commissaire, his eye rolling up the sum at a thousand francs a glance! When his fateful hammer struck, the assembly expressed their relief from tension by one of those great sub-diaphragmatic "ahs!" such as impassioned orators and actors count among the most grateful signs of triumph; and loud applause issued from the public chest when the Director of the National Museum was announced as the purchaser. His serious rivals were an English nobleman and a Russian prince. Had the Marquis of Hertford and Prince Demidoff abstained from the contest, the French government would doubtless have won the prize at something like half the cost. In the same gallery there is the same subject differently treated by the same artist, which was acquired by Louis the Eighteenth in 1817 for six thousand francs. The very picture, along with two others by the same artist, was bought in 1835 for Louis Philippe at half a million francs. The bargain was broken a month afterwards, and it returned to the possession of Marshal Soult. Last February there was a sale of a collection of one of the Princes Demidoff, which brought in all eight hundred thousand francs. In it was the *Stratonice*, by Ingres, formerly owned by the Duke of Orleans, for which the agent of its present princely owner bid ninety-two thousand francs. It was said at the time that yet another prince of another French house was here, as he had been in a famous pamphlet-duel two years ago, the antagonist of the Duc d'Aumale, who else had got it cheaper. Had both princely customers stayed away, an undistinguished third party might have had it yet cheaper; had the vendor not been a prince, *yet* yet cheaper.

To return for a little to the Murillo. There are two malicious legends about it. One is, that the old monks gave the artist his bed and board, and some quite small daily wages for the time he worked, but the balance of his bill in notes of indulgences drawn beyond time. The other is, that Marshal Soult, while campaigning in Spain, conveyed it to his possession still less expensively, by indulging the modern monks in immunity from plunder by any one else. There are also two morose criticisms on it. One is, that it has been so repainted and repaired, as not to leave a clear hand breath of Murillo's original touch.

The other is, that Murillo never touched it, but that it is the work of his pupil and imitator, Ozorio Menesses. A good name in pictures is as immediate a jewel as in man and woman. It may be nothing to young ladies in love, and to the fame of roses, but to amateurs in the fine arts, and to the merits of pictures, there are banknotes in a name. A *Virgin and Child*, called from the catalogue a Murillo, was sold at the Hotel five years ago for forty-five thousand francs; it had been bought a few years before, in an unchristened condition, for seven hundred and fifty.

The cabinet of M. Pierard was one of the finest broken up by the auctioneer's hammer, in 1859. It was remarkably rich in old Dutch and Flemish beauties. Those who do not chance even to have heard of the deceased M. Pierard of Valenciennes, should be advertised that he was not only an ardent lover and learned judge, but, as is apt to be the case with such, a very shrewd commercial connoisseur of art. Well, there was a Ruysdael that he had obtained long ago, when picture gathering was less the mode with carelessly wealthy collectors than it is now, for five thousand francs, and hugged himself over the bargain. But doubts afterwards arose, not as to the intrinsic worth of the same, but as to the authenticity of the signature. Monsieur X. took the benefit of the doubt and the picture for fifteen hundred francs. Somebody will hold himself lucky before many years to acquire it for an additional right-hand cipher. A beautiful marine went for seven hundred instead of seven thousand francs, because, unluckily for the heirs, it was signed doubtfully Solomon instead of assuredly Jacob Ruysdael; a Wouverman—with a white horse, of course—for over twenty-five thousand, that M. Pierard had paid three thousand francs. On the French side there was a concert attributed to Watteau, that stopped at sixteen hundred and fifty; could it have been certified, it would have easily risen an octave of thousands higher. Watteaus, very rare now-a-days, if real, and very high priced, were to be had fifty years ago for the present cost of good engravings of them before the letter. Fifty years earlier again, his satin robed shepherdesses, his harlequins, and pierrots, his smiling landscapes and charming colour, were in yet unexhausted vogue. Boucher, his grosser successor, "*le peintre des graces mignards et des amours bouffis*," whose excessive fertility of production prevents rarity even to-day, and Fragonard, who fell with the Bourbons and Dubarry, before the Revolution and the hard Romanistic severity of David and his school, enjoy a similar though lesser, and less deserved, recovery of estimation, in the prevalent revival of a taste rather catholic than nice, at best eclectic rather than select.

At the Lord Seymour sale three seasons back, the Marquis of Hertford added to his immense magazine a Bonnington, for fifty thousand francs, for which his brother had paid but four thousand five hundred. Bonnington, apart from his intrinsic merit, which is great, has fashion in his favour; I mean that fashion is in

avour of those who have his works to sell. He was an Englishman, born in 1801, a pupil of Gros, deceased in 1828. Had his life been spared a decade longer, he needed to have been a busy man to brush over all the canvases now sold as his. Anything authentically his brings prices that would have been an astonishing comfort to the young artist. But critics had not then discovered, and amateurs had not been taught, that his worst sketches are better worth than he was recompensed for his finished efforts. You will have heard the story of Wiertz, the eccentric Belgian genius? It is said to be true; it is at least characteristic. His *Death of Patroclus* was refused admission to a certain exhibition one year, he not having then conquered reputation. To the next annual exhibition he sent in his own name a *Rubens*, which, by singular accident, was little known, and which the keen-eyed jury of examiners sternly sat on with the expected verdict of, *Get thee behind me and not into our salon*. One is constantly reminded of that refusal, by the wise heads of Leipsic University in 1661, of his doctoral degree to a young candidate, whose thesis read on that occasion now holds honoured place in all complete editions of the works of Leibnitz. Another Belgian, Gallait, was high content to receive for his first exhibited picture, in 1835, the sum of eighteen hundred francs. It has passed through various hands since, growing in estimation as it went, till it fell a few years ago into those of a Demidoff, who was also high content with his acquisition at twenty thousand francs. I think, without being sure, that the same is one of the seventeen choice pictures of the second of the Demidoff sales this year. It was carried off from other active competitors by the Marquis of Hertford for one hundred and fifty-five thousand francs. At the Houdelot sale, in 1857, was a little Chardin, bought by the Duke (then Count) de Morny—who, by the way, is a finely instinctive, as well as cultivated, virtuoso, besides being an ingenious playwright, a clever statesman, and a most successful man of business—bought, I say, the little Chardin for four thousand five hundred francs. M. Michel, who was present, whispered my by-sitting friend L., that he had once sold the identical Chardin for five hundred francs. Now everybody at the Hotel who knows the père Michel—and every frequent body there does know him—knows that it is not in his nature or line ever to sell without handsome profit. At the Hope sale, in 1858, the gem was a Hobbema, which went under the hammer at forty-three thousand francs. It was not so large, perhaps not so complete, a specimen of that unrivalled landscapist, though more pleasing than the one of the famous Patureau sale of a preceding season, which was bought by a Berlin banker for a hundred thousand francs—his most profitable investment, if a constant income of refined pleasure, the endless joy that emanates from a thing of such beauty, can balance money dividends. They were both cheap, and neither could be had to-day, if freshly offered in the

Rue Drouet, for the same sums with accrued interest.

And here is fame for you. It is only in quite latter days that we have come to know that Meindert Hobbema was a contemporary of Ruydsael, to whom his works, despite notable distinctive qualities, were used to be attributed by connoisseurs in their vanity of possession, and “assigned” by unscrupulous traders in their greed for gain. In the two hundred and twenty catalogues of sales that occurred in Holland from 1684 to 1738, edited by Hoet, his name does not once appear. The teacher other than Nature herself, the nationality, the poor skeleton dates even of birth and death of this magic master of earth and air and heaven’s boundless light, we are mainly in the dark about. It would seem probable, from the small number left us of his works, and from the few traces of his life, that he died young, “before his shadow lay long on the earth in the setting sun.” As did Paul Potter and Bonnington at twenty-eight, Brauwer at thirty-two, Gericault at thirty-three, Giorgione at thirty-four, Ruydsael, Parmesan, and Watteau at thirty-seven, Corregio and Caravaggio at forty, Van Dyke and Del Sarto at forty-two, Cuyp at forty-three. Not, my dear young Green Lake, unappreciated modest hope of the new school, that your discoloured fancy should draw from this necrology of the early-called fatidic horoscope for self and further claims on the exhausted interest of friends. For Titian the Great lived to ninety-nine, and brave old Michael Angelo to ninety, Tintoretto and Claude Gelee to eighty-two, Primatuccio and Chardin to eighty, Greuze to seventy-nine, David to seventy-seven, Poussin to seventy-one, Paul Gerritzen, the miller’s son, whom we are agreed to call Rembrandt van Ryn, to sixty-eight, Da Vinci, who was only not one of the famously great in science because he was greater in art, to sixty-four, Proudion and Rubens, graceful purity and exuberant force, to sixty-three.

I was saying that Hobbemas used sometimes to be signed Ruydsael. It is far more usual now-a-days to put Hobbema, or some other name in good credit on the art exchange, to Exyze’s canvas. There are adepts in this peculiar department of what may be literally styled the literature of art. They are as erudite as skilful. The majority of amateurs—especially the fashionable sort, who are the majority—though they may have or come to have a more or less sincere love of art for art’s sake, are most superficial, extrinsic connoisseurs. Their first ordinary question is before venturing to bid, “Is it signed?” The vendor is able to answer this question affirmatively oftener than he otherwise could, thanks to the professional monogrammatist. This counterfeiter has made a special study of signatures, not only materially of their i dottings and t crossings, but historically of their variations at different epochs. Thus he knows, and practises in accordance with his knowledge, that Hobbema signed his large pieces with christian and family name in full;

others simply M. Hobbema, others still Hobbema; that the letters should be small, irregular, greyish in colour, not too well formed nor too prominent, generally in the middle foreground *on* the ground, and not in the right or left-hand corners, rather indistinct, and without date. Rembrandt should be in the left not the right corner, in bitumen, with a long-tailed R: if in full, Rembrandt van Ryn, then the date should be affixed. A Proudhon, done before he went to Italy, should be signed in capitals P. P. P.; after that epoch, and according to circumstances, Prud'hon, or Pierre Paul Prud'hon, the letters traced as if with a tremulous hand. This matter of signatures is curiously insisted on by virtuosi, even in cases that admit no question of authenticity. I know a Diaz, most marked with his marked manner of ten years ago—so far superior to his present degeneration—but by some accident not signed, sold in 1859 for four hundred francs, cheerfully signed next day by the master, and resold next year for six hundred francs to the same man whose bid was arrested a twelvemonth before at three hundred and forty.

The next best proof of worth after high birth is good social connexion. Next to signatures come seals. "You observe, gentlemen," remarks the expert, as he hands the dubious Corregio to the commissaire, "that the seal on the back of the frame shows this to have come from the gallery of Cardinal Fesch." And although it is as plain as any possible combination of pike-staves or hand-spikes that his eminence's gallery never could have warehoused all the works attributed to that magazine, it is as true as history and the laws of trade that any one work with such sealing-waxed proof of respectable local habitation and associate name sells five, ten, twenty per cent higher than though it lacked the cardinal's hat in red wax. A doubtful Scarabocchio, which, if a body only dare trust to his own eyes, is a sad waste of oils and pigments, has gained a certain value by sojourning in the cabinet of the Marquis of Bricabrac; if it can be shown that he had it from the dispersion of the celebrated gallery of the Duke d'Inganno, its Hotel price is often doubled. Again, as a man sometimes of low origin and poor character, and unaccustomed to good company, obtains credit by having the reputation of being regardless of expense, so a worthless picture may come to have money worth by running up an extravagant bill at the Hotel. The owner sends it there, gives some one an order to bid up to, say, nine hundred and fifty, and, acting as his rival, carries off himself at one thousand francs his own property that is dear at one hundred francs. When now he offers it for a real sale to an innocent amateur, as a charming bit, for a mere honest trifle of profit on its cost at auction, he has the commissaire's bill to show in proof. There are too numerous other tricks practised at the Hotel. Unhappily they are not peculiar to that institution, and need not be insisted on. The world is full of baits and hooks and gudgeons and hard lines, but abounds in pleasant places too, of

which, despite anything yet said, the Hotel is one. The dealings there are generally honest. If people will buy poor pictures sometimes for good ones, and pay dearly for them, the fault is oftenest their own. And since they oftenest derive pleasure from them that harms no one else, where is the fault? Suppose your Pittoraccio is not an original after all. What then, if you are persuaded that it is? But perhaps you never bought a Pittoraccio, and do not know what "a plentiful supply of inward comforts and contentments it hath." I have and do. It was last year, from the "collection of M. D., sold on account of his leaving Paris—*à cause de départ*." There are M. D.s departing in this way every winter by the Rue Drouot. The wayfarer may read on the dead walls large posters announcing the going of themselves and effects. What undiscovered bournes they tend to, why their family initial is always D., whether they come back the next year with more galleries—these are among the mysteries of Paris. The D. cabinet was not stocked altogether with masterpieces. I seemed to recollect having seen parts of it at former similar sales, and recognised some of my passing acquaintance from the shops of the Rue Jacob and the Quais. The auction was advertised to commence at one o'clock "very precisely," which is French time for about two. I went early and took a front seat. At a quarter-past two the somewhat dingy object of my hopes was put upon the table. This was encouraging to the hopes, for prices rule considerably lower during the first half-hour or so than afterwards, when, to speak the language of the place, "la veute soit chauffée." This warming of the sale depends partly on the commissaire priseur and crier and expert, whose respective reputations and consequent profits depend in turn largely upon their skill in this sort of calorification. They generally begin by throwing in the really or supposedly less important articles, without reference to their catalogue order, by way of kindling wood as it were. But besides their stoking and blowing, the house grows spontaneously more combustible with time. The magnetic emanations or what not of each individual are developed by attrition with his right and left-hand neighbours; the rising sympathies cumulate and fuse and re-act again with multiplied force on each individual, and, the official operators rubbing all the while, a sweeping electric current is established, running across the table with ever-increasing force and rapidity, and bids and cries and cries and bids leap back and forth like battledore and shuttlecock or live lightning.

The expert took it from the shelf, run a sponge over it, gave it a last penetrating look away beneath the varnish, handed it to the commissaire, turned to the catalogue, and heralded: Sainte Zitella, by Pittoraccio, No. 47. "Pittoraccio, No. 47 of the catalogue, messieurs!" cried the commissaire. "Sainte Zitella," shouted the crier, "at—how much?"—aside to the expert—"five hundred francs."

Five hundred francs, four hundred and ninety, eighty, and so down to three, two, one hundred, and still the house gave no sign. Which was rather a bad sign for me. The expert's first announced figure is generally somewhere near what he, from his large experience, judges the picture will really bring. When no one interrupts such a gradation of tentative falls as this, the probability is that half a dozen persons are watching and waiting each that the rest show their hands first. This constantly-recurring phenomenon is one of the many queerities of the Hotel. "Come now! Anything you will; dealer's price, *prix de marchand, voyons!* Ninety? Eighty? But, gentlemen!—a ravishing morsel—given for nothing—comes from the gallery of Cardinal Fiasco, as you may see from the seal with the cardinal hat on the back of frame—*voyons!*" So cry, and exhort, and announce, and objurgate the officials, till the crier has rattled down to seventy-five. Echo from the house answers, "Seventy-five." This is what may be called the seed price, which swells slowly by ones and twos to a hundred, where its growth is arrested. Then the commissaire, who has faith in its vitality, digs about it with his hammer, and pours out round about it his eloquence; and the expert takes a new look at the picture, and has the air of discovering new beauties and of confirming his original estimate of its originality; and père Michel then asks to see it, though he knows by heart its every line and speck of dirt, and scans it with intense keenness, veiled by thin indifference of manner, and grafts a fresh five on the hundred. Say now the present possessor of that *chef-d'œuvre* enters into the strife, holding it safe to go along with such a shrewd shop-dealer, whom he drives off the track at one hundred and seventy-five, and so hopes to have it. But some one two rows of chairs behind, or a standing member in the back of the house, or some other quidam quite invisible to him, has established communication with the wrong side of the tables, and rises another ten. I am hurt and warming, so I spring ten over him, angrily, perhaps fifteen: hitchet a hatchet, up he goes, and up I, to two hundred and fifty, seventy, eighty, and so on. But I beat him in the end.

Here is the first enjoyment, which is of triumph. Then I got it cheap, which is enjoyment the second, of economy mixed with subtler ingredients. The pleasure of fishing or of gold-hunting is not in the money-value of the fish or of the nugget only; it is in the luck, in finding a firm foothold to the strained tiptoe of hope, instead of falling down, as was possible, on one's heels again, or further, lower back. To state the case arithmetically: You have bought to-day a Spaventole or a Van Abscheusen for ten pounds, which, rather than not have had, you would have paid forty pounds; on your way

home from the scene of your triumph, your pocket is picked of thirty pounds in money, or of a watch of that value: this night you lie down to rest an ever so much happier man than though you had paid forty pounds for your prize and had not had your pocket picked. The third enjoyment is in the carrying home of the picture—an enjoyment of which wealthy amateurs and impersonal national galleries and the like, who employ agents and porters, never taste. You hold the precious object fast, and warm, and proudly in your arms, like an Erlking's daughter or the first-born heir of your house. The very aching of your muscles, so closely associated with the reward of the effort, spices the pleasure. You slip along through side-streets to get on the sooner to where you can gloat in freedom over your treasure. You feel for passengers you meet, who have no Pittoraccios under their arms, the gratefully-mingled sentiment of gratitude for your favoured lot, and of cheap compassion creditable to your humanity for their deprivations. You hurriedly snatch the key from the concierge, mount the stairs two at a time to your own door, tremulously miss the keyhole for two minutes, and are now at home. You set Pittoraccio on a chair by the window, then on another chair by another window; you try him, bis in idem, by all the lights from sunrise to sundown, and by lamp and candle; you hang him by the bookcase, and cut him down to re-hang him by the door, new merits of execution coming out at every turn. Next you show him to your friends, and consult them for opinions, which, if they are persons of taste, are affirmative and congratulatory.

That having lasted for a few days, then come further enjoyments, the most exquisite of all, to wit, the cleaning process, the removal of the varnish, the almost discovery of a signature, the complete discovery of the master's touch and quality, and the crowning glory of re-varnishing. But here words fail—like merchants in a financial crisis, at the very moment when need is sorest—and I shut up shop.

Although further consideration and comparison have led me to the conviction that the so-called *Sainte Zitella* of Pittoraccio is a burgomaster's wife by Van Schmieren, the real value of that *chef-d'œuvre* is rather increased than diminished by the change of attribution.

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